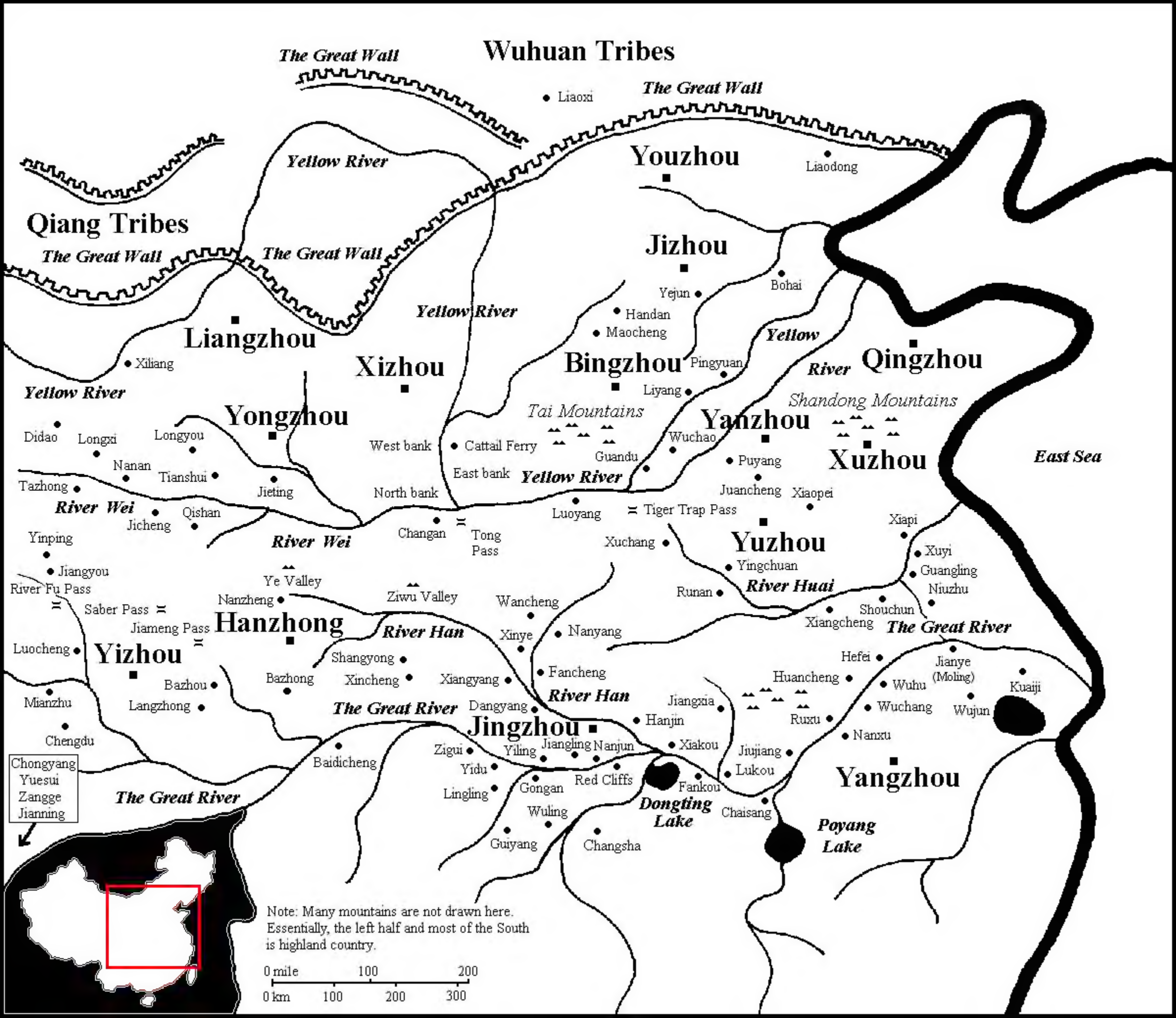

Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

三国志（さんごくし） 15

玄徳の秘計

横山光輝

希望コミックス58

CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI
PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

CAO CAO MENGDE:

THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. AFTER RESCUING THE EMPEROR FROM LI JUE AND GUO SI, HE IS CURRENTLY THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN AND HAS CONTROL OVER THE IMPERIAL COURT.

CHEN DENG:

THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY THE SUBORDINATE TO TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU. EVER SINCE LU BU HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF XUZHOU, HE HAS SERVED LU BU BUT IN NAME ONLY. UNDER CAO CAO'S ORDERS, HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:

FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO HAS SWORN FALSE ALLEGIANCE TO LU BU. HE AND HIS SON SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED OUT LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CONSORT HE:

HE JIN'S YOUNGER SISTER. ORIGINALLY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS WHO THEN PRESENTED HER TO EMPEROR LING. SHE BECAME EMPEROR LING'S FAVOURITE CONSORT AND GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE LIU BIAN. SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED BY LI RU.

DIAN WEI:

CAO CAO'S FIERCE GENERAL RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS "E LAI," A MIGHTY GENERAL WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU. HE WAS KILLED IN VOLUME 12 DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO AT WANCHENG.

DIAO CHAN:

A SLAVE GIRL BELONGING TO WANG YUN, BUT HE RAISED THE GIRL MORE OF AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. IN VOLUME 7, SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO. SHE KILLED HERSELF AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL IN VOLUME 8.

DONG CHENG:

A TRUSTED RETAINER OF EMPEROR XIAN. IN VOLUME 9, HE HELPS THE EMPEROR ESCAPE FROM LI JUE AND GUO SI.

DONG ZHUO:

GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZES CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATS HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. HE IS DEPICTED AS SADISTIC, CORRUPT, AND RUTHLESS TYRANT. HE WAS KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

GONGSUN ZAN:

GOVERNOR OF BEIPING WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. HE WAGED WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO AFTER THE LATTER TRICKED HIM AND KILLED HIS YOUNGER BROTHER BUT HAS SINCE MADE PEACE WITH YUAN SHAO.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:

SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.

HE JIN:

OLDER BROTHER OF CONSORT HE. ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER BECAME EMPEROR LING'S CONSORT. HE ATTEMPTS TO THE TEN ATTENDANTS BUT IS DISSUADED BY HIS YOUNGER SISTER. HE IS LATER ASSASSINATED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS.

JIA XU:

THE CUNNING STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO ZHANG XIU. IN VOLUME 12, HE AND ZHANG XIU PLOTTED A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO.

LIU BEI XUANDE:

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. HE IS A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. AS OF VOLUME 12, HE IS THE GOVERNOR OF XIAOPEI AND WORKING SECRETLY WITH THE CHEN FAMILY TO BRING DOWN LU BU.

LIU BIAO:

THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU WHO, ALONG WITH YUAN SHAO, TRIED TO KILL SUN JIAN TO RECOVER THE STOLEN IMPERIAL SEAL. HE SUCCESSFULLY THWARTED SUN JIAN'S ATTEMPTS TO TAKE JINGZHOU. HAS CURRENTLY JOINED HANDS WITH ZHANG XIU.

LU BU:

HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR IN THE LAND WHO RIDES ON THE FASTEST HORSE IN THE LAND, THE RED HARE. HE IS CURRENTLY THE GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU. IN VOLUME 14 WHILE FIGHTING WITH CAO CAO AND LIU BEI'S FORCES, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES (HOU CHENG, WEI XU, SONG XIAN) WHO HANDED HIM OVER TO CAO CAO AND WAS EXECUTED.

SUN JIAN:

BORN IN WU COMMANDERY AND WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. HE PARTICIPATED IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO IN VOLUME 5. WHEN HE FOUND THE IMPERIAL SEAL, HIS ALLIES YUAN SHAO AND LIU BIAO ATTEMPTED TO KILL HIM TO RETRIEVE THE SEAL. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIED TO EXACT HIS REVENGE BY ATTACKING LIU BIAO BUT WAS KILLED IN BATTLE.

SUN CE:

ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. AFTER LENDING YUAN SHU THE IMPERIAL SEAL TO BORROW AN ARMY, HE SUCCESSFULLY CONQUERED THE SOUTHEASTERN REGIONS OF JIANGNAN AND JIANGDONG.

SUN QUAN:

YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE.

TAISHI CI:

SUN CE'S TRUSTED GENERAL, FORMERLY LIU YAO'S SUBORDINATE BUT LATER SWITCHED SIDES TO BECOME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE AFTER HE WAS CAPTURED.

TEN ATTENDANTS:

A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.

WANG YUN:

AN OLD MAN WHO HOLDS THE POST OF MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN HAN. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL. HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY WHO INVADE CHANG'AN (UNSHOWN IN MANGA)

WEN CHOU:

HE AND YAN LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS.

YAN LIANG:

HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS.

XU CHU:

FORMERLY A PEASANT, HIS TALENTS WERE NOTICED BY CAO CAO WHO THEN TURNED HIM INTO ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES. HE IS NOW A GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO.

YUAN SHAO:

ORIGINALLY AN ADVISOR TO HE JIN, HE LEFT THE CAPITAL AND BECAME THE GOVERNOR OF BOHAI COMMANDERY WHEN DONG ZHUO CAME TO RULE OVER LUOYANG. HE IS CURRENTLY THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU.

YUAN SHU:

YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE HAS DECLARED HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY.

XIAHOU DUN:

ONE OF CAO CAO'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 13, HE LOSES HIS LEFT EYE TO AN ENEMY ARROW DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S FORCES.

XUN YU:

ONE OF CAO CAO'S MOST TALENTED ADVISORS.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:

A FIERCE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:

A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO BUT HE IS NOW UNDER GONGSUN ZAN'S SERVICE. HE WISHES TO BE LIU BEI'S RETAINER, HOWEVER.

CHARACTERS OF SANGOKUSHI

PART 2: MINOR CHARACTERS

CAO HONG:

A GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO WHO IS ALSO HIS COUSIN. HE SAVED CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH IN VOLUME 6.

CAO SONG:

CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE WAS KILLED BY ZHANG KAI, AN ESCORT SENT BY TAO QIAN, WHO WANTED TO STEAL HIS FORTUNES.

CHENG GONG:

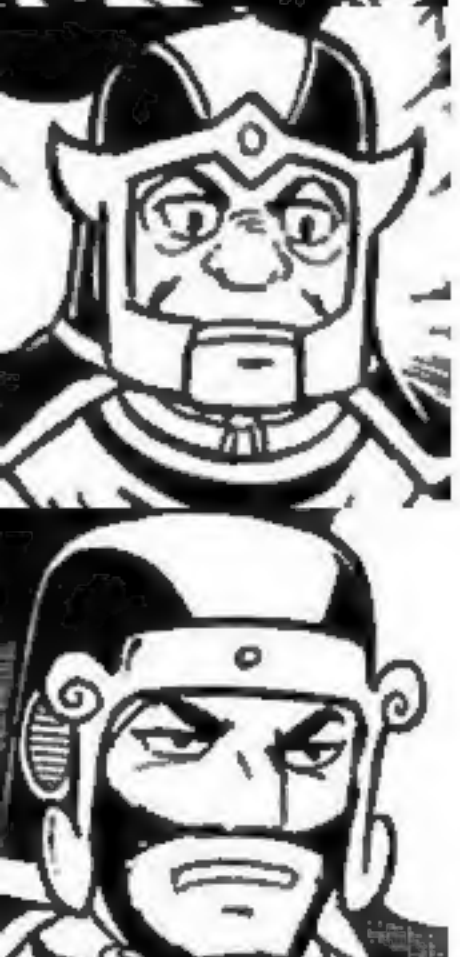
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH CAO CAO AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU'S SIDE, AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH LU BU, IN VOLUME 14.

DING YUAN:

GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN. HE WAS KILLED BY LU BU.

EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:

FORMER EMPEROR LING'S MOTHER AND EMPEROR XIAN'S GRANDMOTHER. IN VOLUME 3, CONSORT HE ORDERED FOR HER DEATH IN ORDER TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S SEAT AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.



GAO SHUN:

ONE OF LU BU'S TRUSTED GENERALS.

GUO SI:

A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED UNDER DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED. IN VOLUME 9, HE AND LI JUE FIGHT OVER THE EMPEROR BUT ENDS UP LOSING THE EMPEROR TO CAO CAO.

HOU CHENG:

ONE OF LU BU'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 14, HE, ALONG WITH GENERALS WEI XU AND SONG XIAN, BETRAYED LU BU AND DEFECTED TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

HUA XIONG:

ONE OF DONG ZHUO'S GENERALS. HE DEFEATED SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT WAS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU IN VOLUME 5.

JIANG QIN:

FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE AFTER REMEMBERING HOW FIERCE HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN, WAS LIKE. HE AND JIANG QIN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ALLOWING SUN CE TO CAPTURE NIUZHU.

LADY FUYOU:

FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE ALL KILLED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.

LI JUE:

A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED UNDER DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED. IN VOLUME 9, HE AND GUO SI FIGHT OVER THE EMPEROR BUT ENDS UP LOSING THE EMPEROR TO CAO CAO.

LIU BIAN:

THE SON OF CONSORT HE AND WAS BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER EMPEROR LING'S DEATH. HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.

LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):

FORMERLY KNOWN AS THE PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN. HE BECAME THE EMPEROR WHEN DONG ZHUO FORCIBLY DETHRONED HIS HALF-BROTHER LIU BIAN.

LIU YAO:

GOVERNOR OF YANGZHOU. HE STOLE THE LANDS OF DANYANG AWAY FROM SUN CE'S UNCLE, WU JIN. IN VOLUME 10, SUN CE SETS OUT TO RECLAIM HIS UNCLE'S LOST LANDS AND CONQUER THE REST OF YANGZHOU.

TAO QIAN:

THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY ANGERED CAO CAO WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLED CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.

ZHANG BAO:

ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.

ZHANG JIAO:

LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION. HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.

ZHOU TAI:

FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE AFTER REMEMBERING HOW FIERCE HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN, WAS LIKE. HE AND JIANG QIN WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ALLOWING SUN CE TO CAPTURE NIUZHU.

ZHANG YING:

ONE OF LIU YAO'S GENERALS. HE WAS SENT TO DEFEND NIUZHU FROM SUN CE BUT WAS DEFEATED WHEN BANDITS (JIANG QIN AND ZHOU TAI) STAGED AN UPRISING FROM WITHIN.

ZHANG ZHAO/ZHANG HONG:

THE TWO GENIUSES OF JIANGDONG THAT ARE REFERRED TO AS THE "TWO ZHANGS." SUN CE SOUGHT TO ASK FOR THEIR ASSITANCE BEFORE SETTING OUT ON HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER SOUTHEASTERN CHINA. AFTER SUN CE'S ADAMANT INSISTENCE, THEY FINALLY AGREED TO HELP HIM.

-MORE TO COME IN THE FUTURE-

SANGOKUSHI

15

XUANDE'S SCHEME

CAO CAO MENGDE

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

SANGOKUSHI
(ROMANCE OF THE
THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

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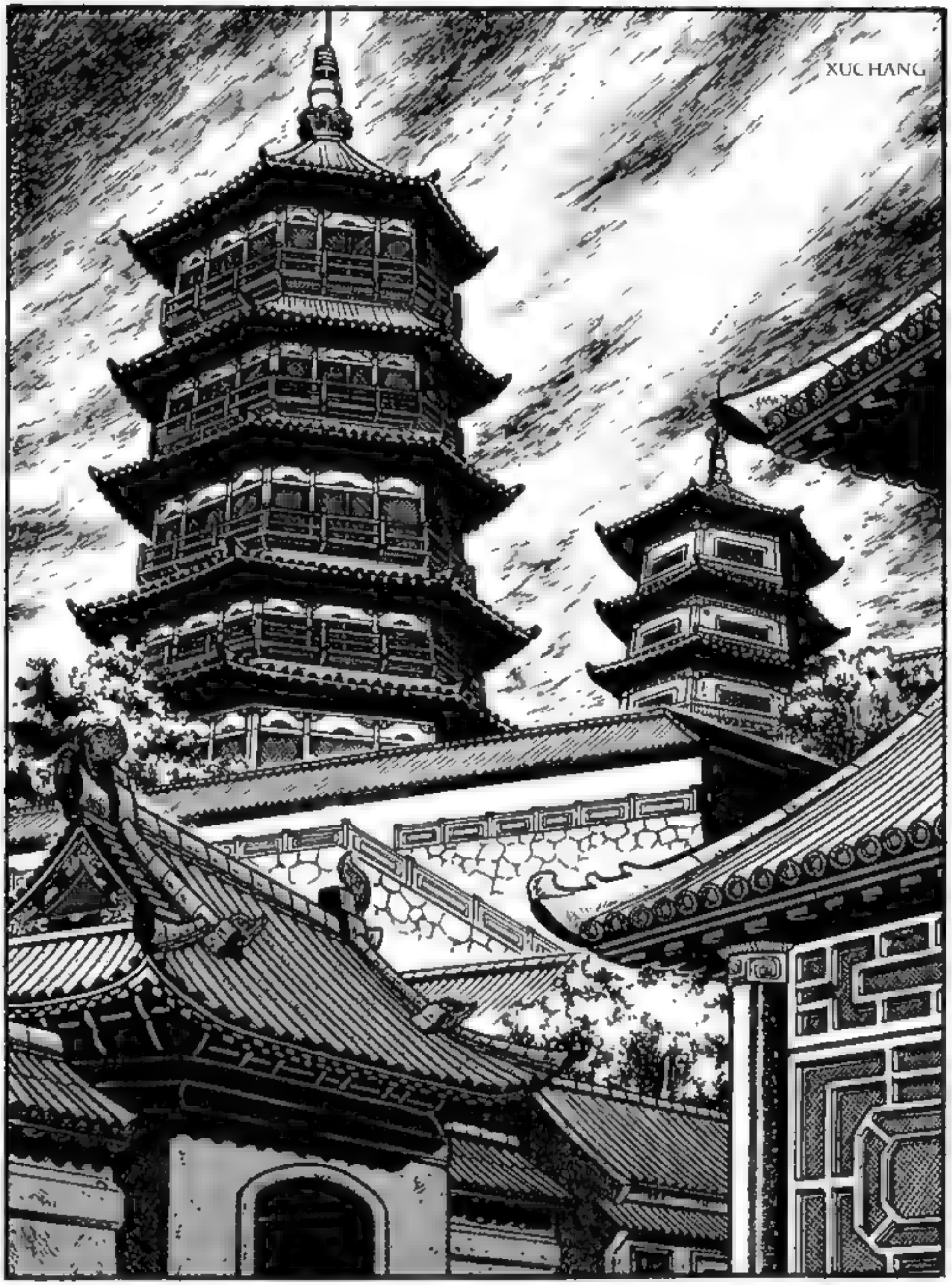
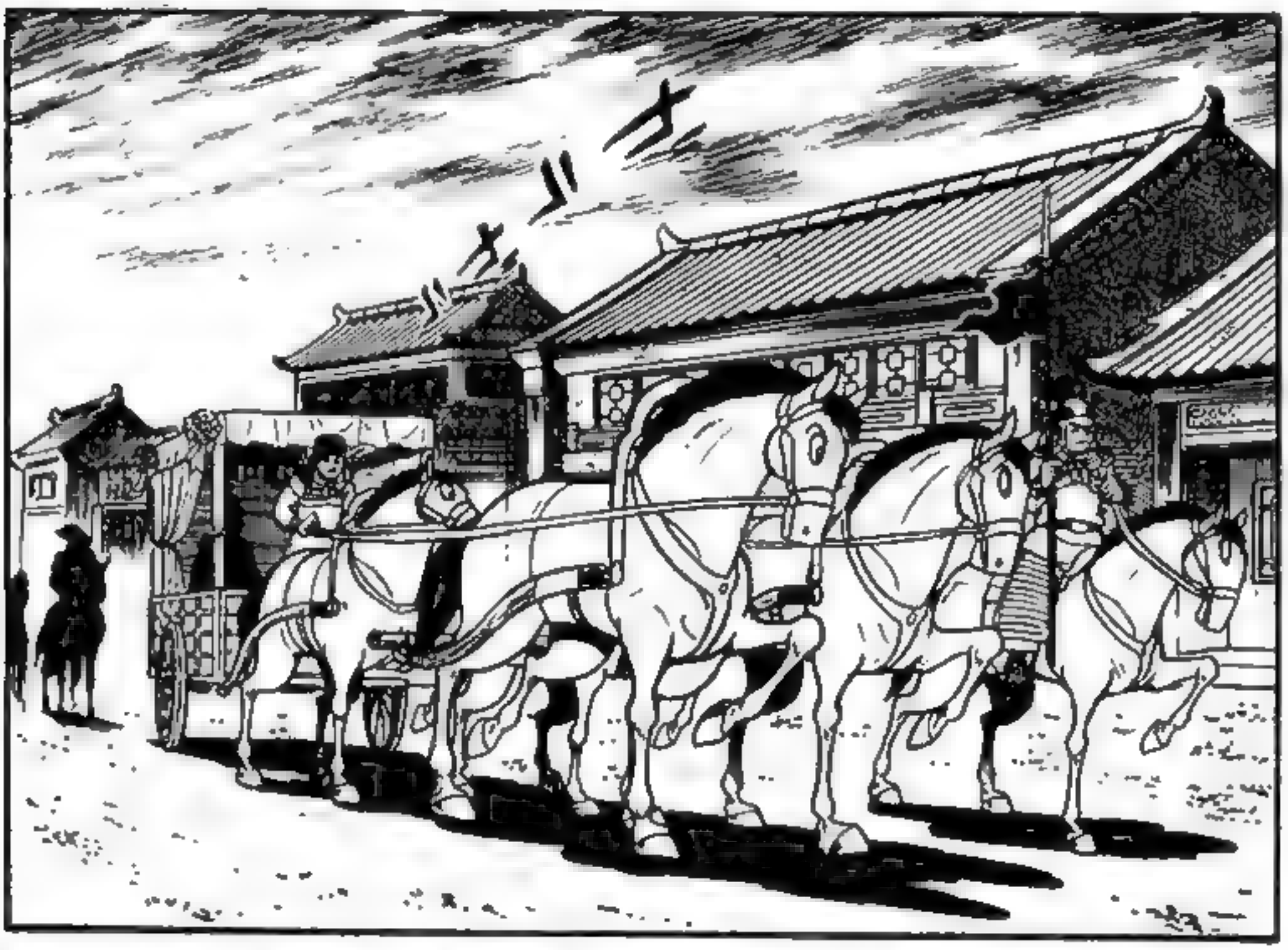
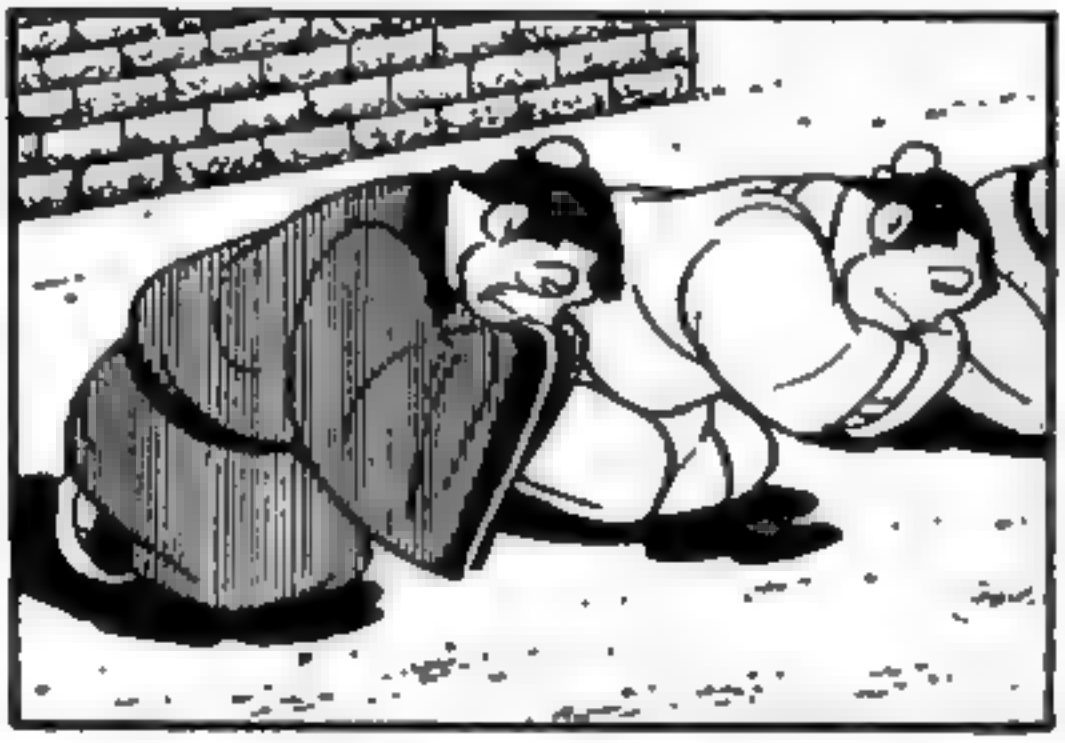
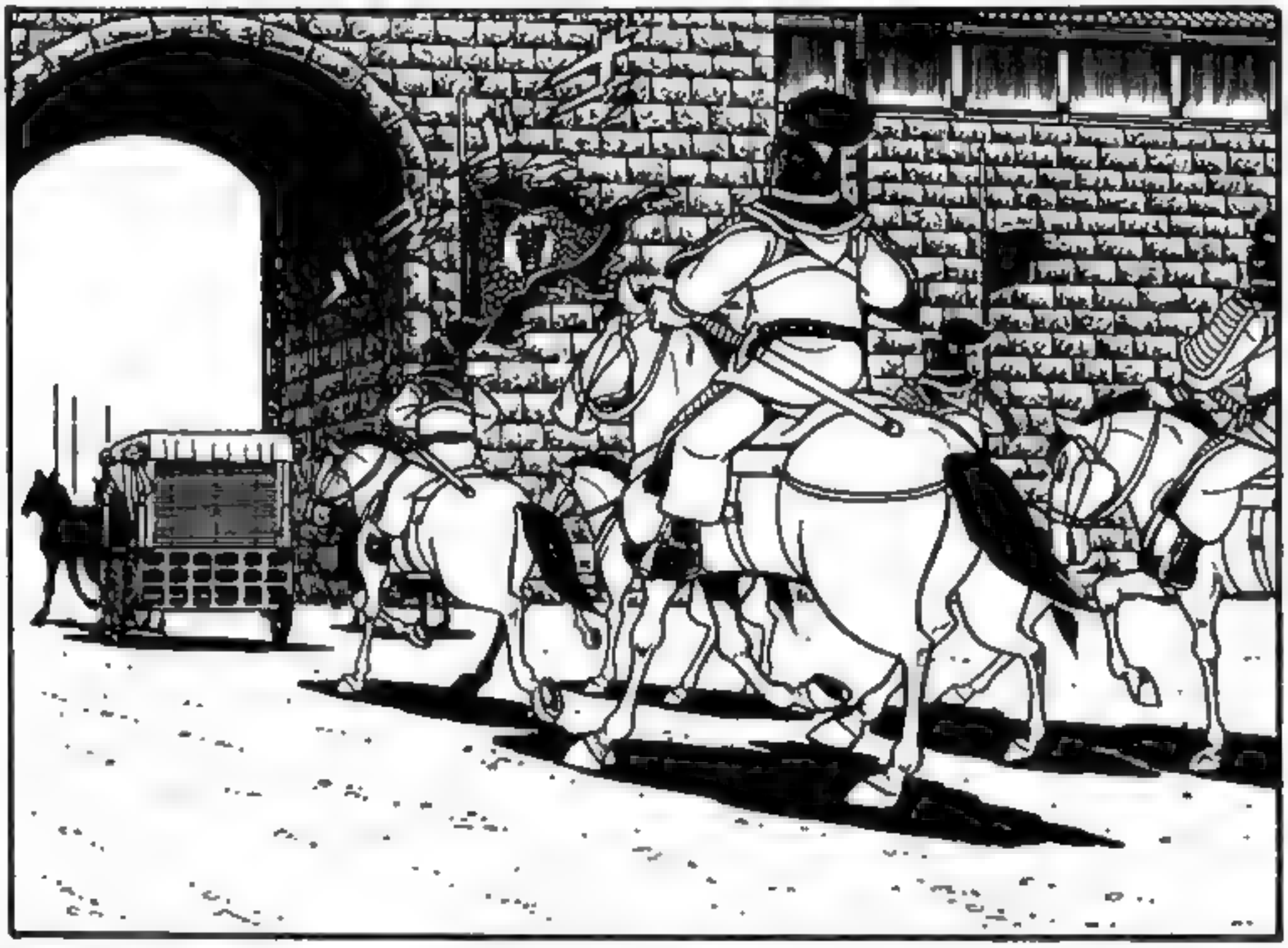
（月刊『少年ワールド』掲載）

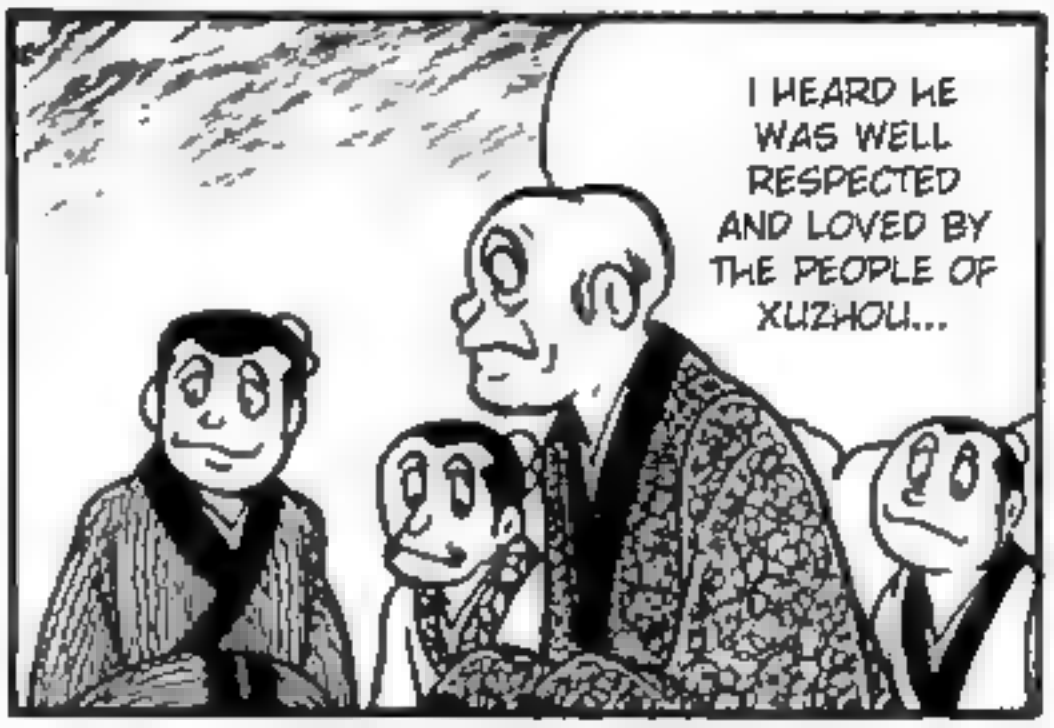
A RETAINER'S CONDUCT



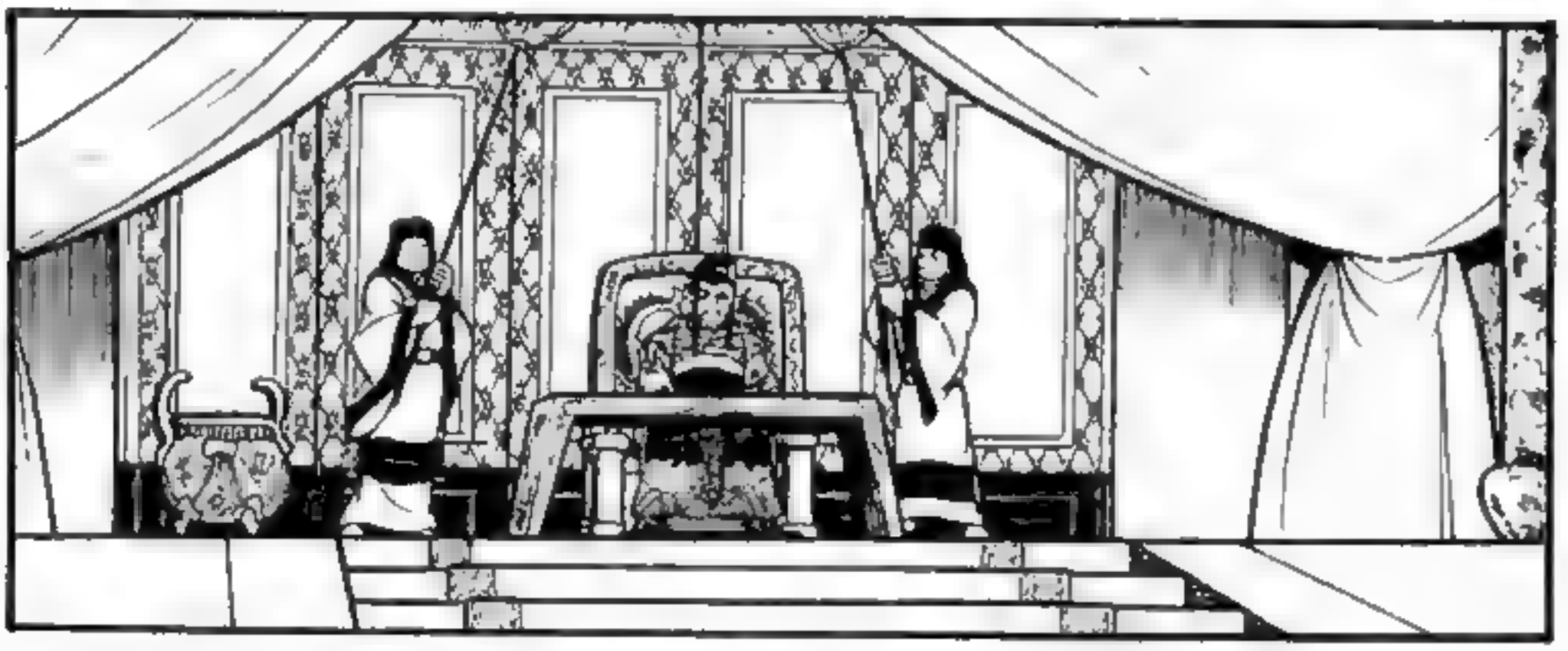







I HEARD HE WAS WELL RESPECTED AND LOVED BY THE PEOPLE OF XUZHOU...

IS LIU BEI THE MAN WHO WAS SITTING NEXT TO CHANCELLOR CAO CAO JUST NOW?



THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RECENT VICTORY, CHANCELLOR CAO CAO.

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

MAY YOU BE LIU BEI?

THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.

I'D LIKE TO CONGRATULATE YOU AS WELL ON YOUR RECENT VICTORY, WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE CHANCELLOR.

I MUST CONFESS THAT I HARDLY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT YOU. IF YOU WILL, PLEASE TELL ME OF YOUR LINEAGE.

WHAT?

I AM THE SON OF LIU HONG, AND GRANDSON TO LIU XIONG. MY GRANDFATHER WAS A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF PRINCE JING OF ZHONGSHAN, WHO WAS THE SON OF EMPEROR JING.

A DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING ? THEN ARE YOU NOT A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY!?

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

BRING THE GENEOLOGY REGISTRY RIGHT AWAY.

WHISPER WHISPER

WHISPER WHISPER

WHISPER WHISPER

EMPEROR LIU JING OF HAN HAD 14 SONS.

READ IT OUT ALOUD.

I HAVE BROUGHT THE GENEOLOGY REGISTRY, YOUR HIGHNESS.

LIAN BEGAT YING, LORD OF QINGYANG, WHOSE SON WAS JIAN...

THE 7TH OF WHOM WAS LIU SHENG, TITLED PRINCE JING OF ZHONGSHAN. SHENG BEGAT LIU ZHEN, TITLED MARQUIS OF LUCHENG. ZHEN BEGAT ANG, LORD OF PEI, WHO BEGAT LU, LORD OF ZHANG, WHOSE SON WAS LIAN, LORD OF YISHUI.

AS LIU BEI HEARD THE NAME OF HIS ANCESTORS,

AND WHEN HE THOUGHT OF HOW EVEN HE HAD BEEN A MERE STRAW MAT WEAVER NOT TOO LONG AGO

HE REMEMBERED HOW HIS FAMILY WAS STRIPPED OF THEIR RIGHTFUL TITLE AND FORCED TO LIVE AS PEASANTS,

WARM TEARS BEGAN TO FALL DOWN HIS CHEEK

I AM ASTOUNDED.

I NEVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED THAT YOU AND I WOULD BE OF THE SAME FAMILY...

THERE IS NO DOUBT, YOUR HIGHNESS. LIU BEI IS THE DIRECT DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING.

THANK YOU, YOUR HIGHNESS.

XUANDE, PLEASE BE OF GREAT STRENGTH AND SUPPORT TO ME FROM HEREON.

WORD IS, THAT HIS HIGHNESS IS CALLING FOR IMPERIAL UNCLE LIU BEI'S ADVICE FOR EVEN THE SMALLEST MATTERS...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHAT DOES MY LORD FEEL ABOUT THE CURRENT SITUATION?

HAHA. XUANDE AND I ARE LIKE BROTHERS, THERE IS NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT FOR THE TIME BEING.

HE WILL SURELY BE A VERY INFLUENTIAL FIGURE IN THE IMPERIAL COURT SOON.

BUT HE MAY BECOME A GREAT THREAT TO SIR'S AMBITION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

THE TIME IS NOT YET RIGHT. ACTING TOO SOON WILL ONLY BRING HARM UPON ME.

YES, I AM AWARE OF THAT BUT YOU MUST KEEP QUIET OF SUCH MATTERS. THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY LOYAL SUPPORTERS OF HIS HIGHNESS .

I MUST WAIT FOR THE RIGHT TIME ...

AH, WHY DON'T I INVITE HIS HIGHNESS OUT FOR A HUNT? I'VE BEEN BUSY WITH TOO MANY BATTLES AND SO A HUNT WILL BE QUITE ENJOYABLE.

HAHA, BUT OF COURSE, THE REAL PURPOSE OF THE HUNT WILL BE TO SEE WHO IS ON WHICH SIDE...

YES...

WE SHALL PREPARE FOR IT RIGHT AWAY.

AN EXCELLENT IDEA, MY LORD.

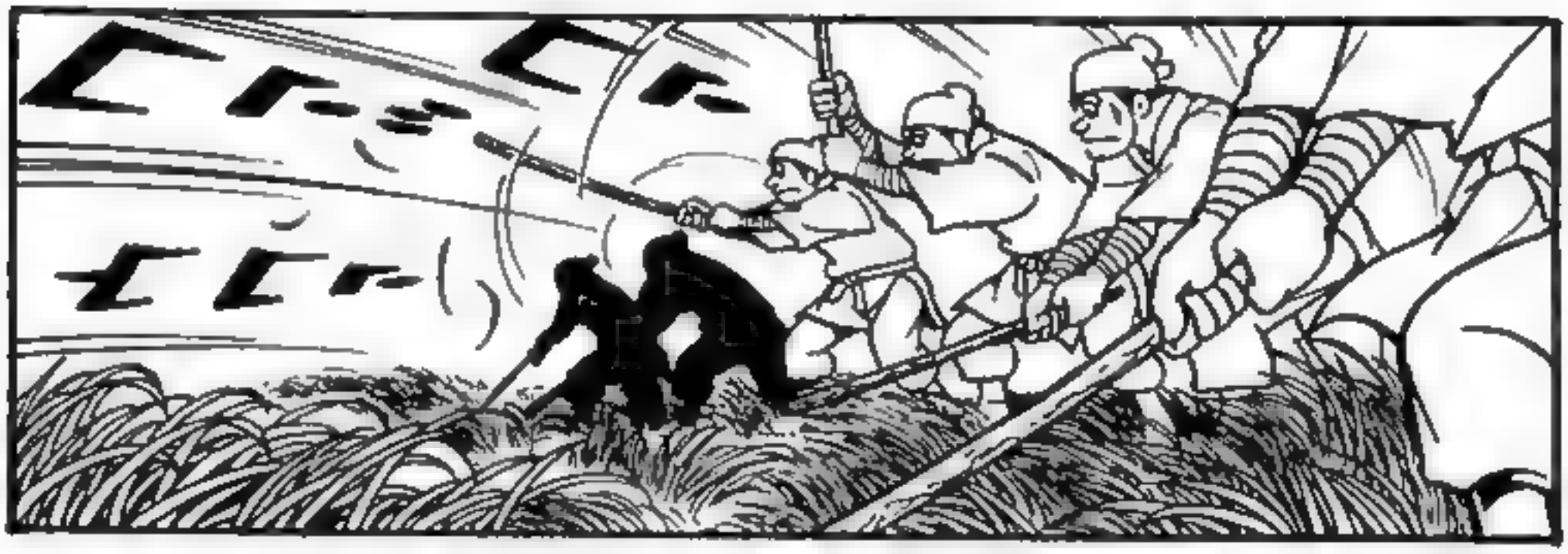
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

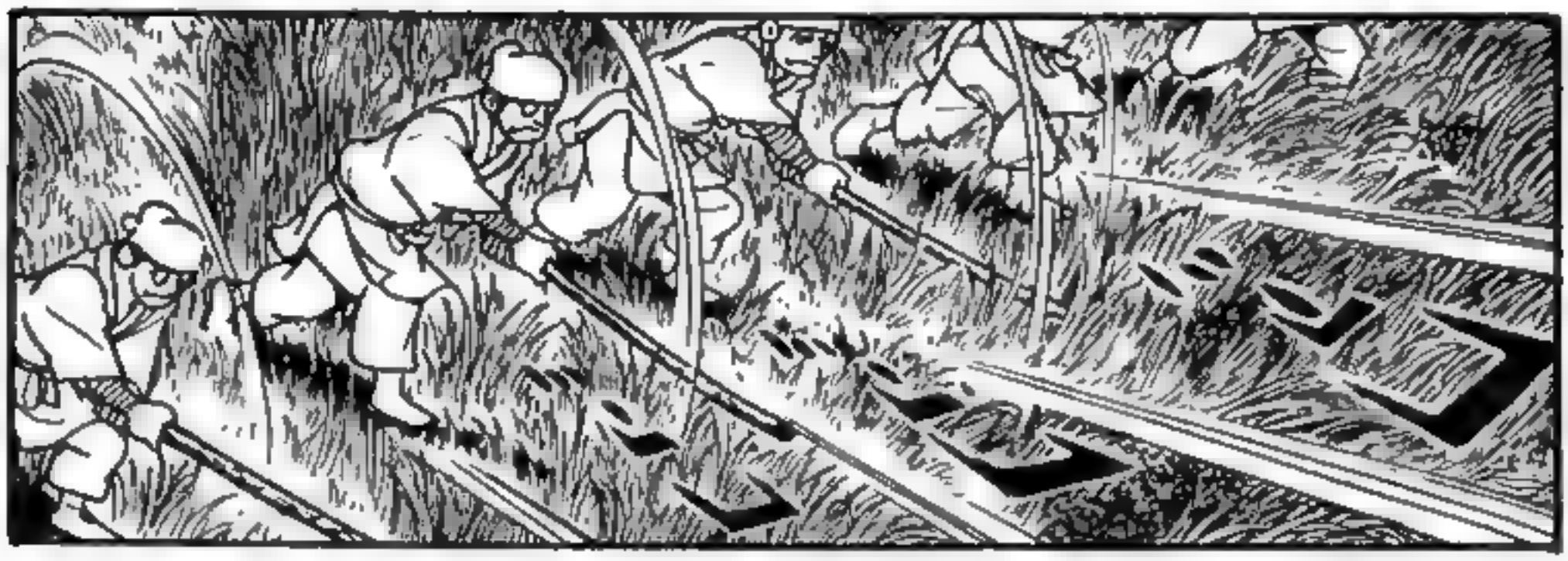
HMM? CHANCELLOR CAO CAO HAS INVITED ME OUT ON A HUNT?

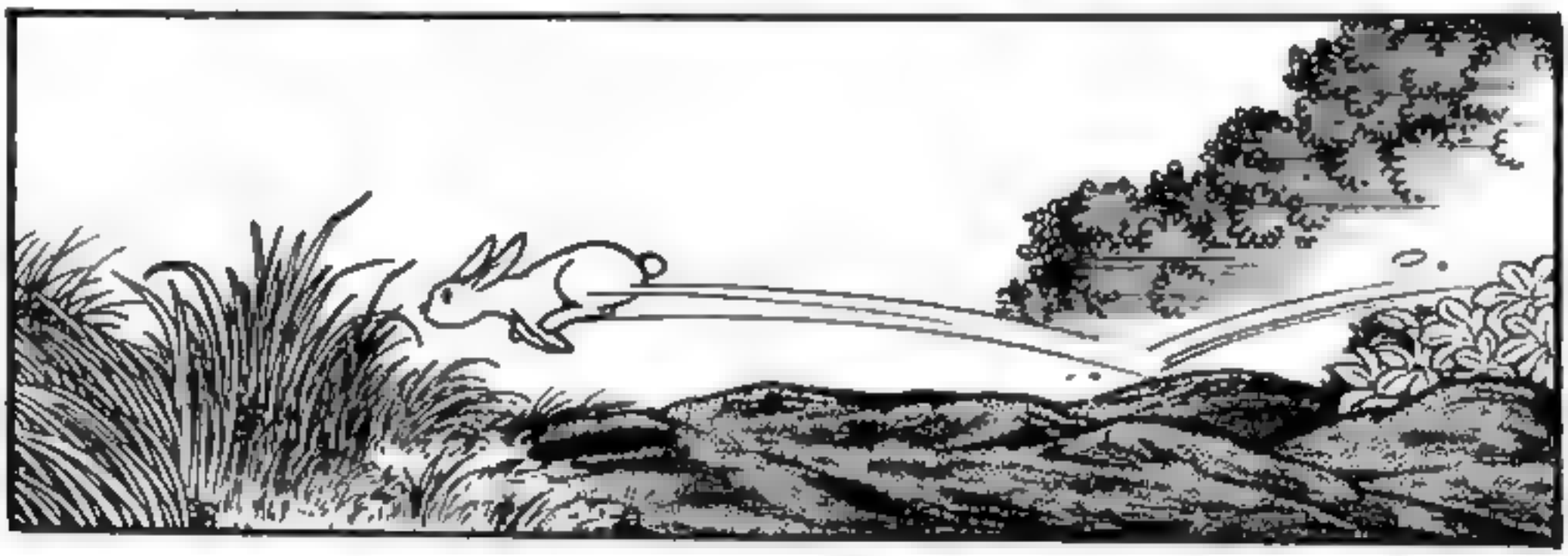
I DO NOT WISH TO GO HUNTING.

SO I HAVE NO CHOICE...?
I'M AFRAID THAT TO FLAT OUT REJECT THE CHANCELLOR'S OFFER WILL BE A LITTLE...
IF YOUR HIGHNESS WISHES FOR IMPERIAL UNCLE TO COME, I SHALL SEND WORD TO HIM IMMEDIATELY.
WILL IMPERIAL UNCLE LIU BE COMING AS WELL?
YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
YES, PLEASE INVITE HIM.

THE DAY OF
THE HUNT

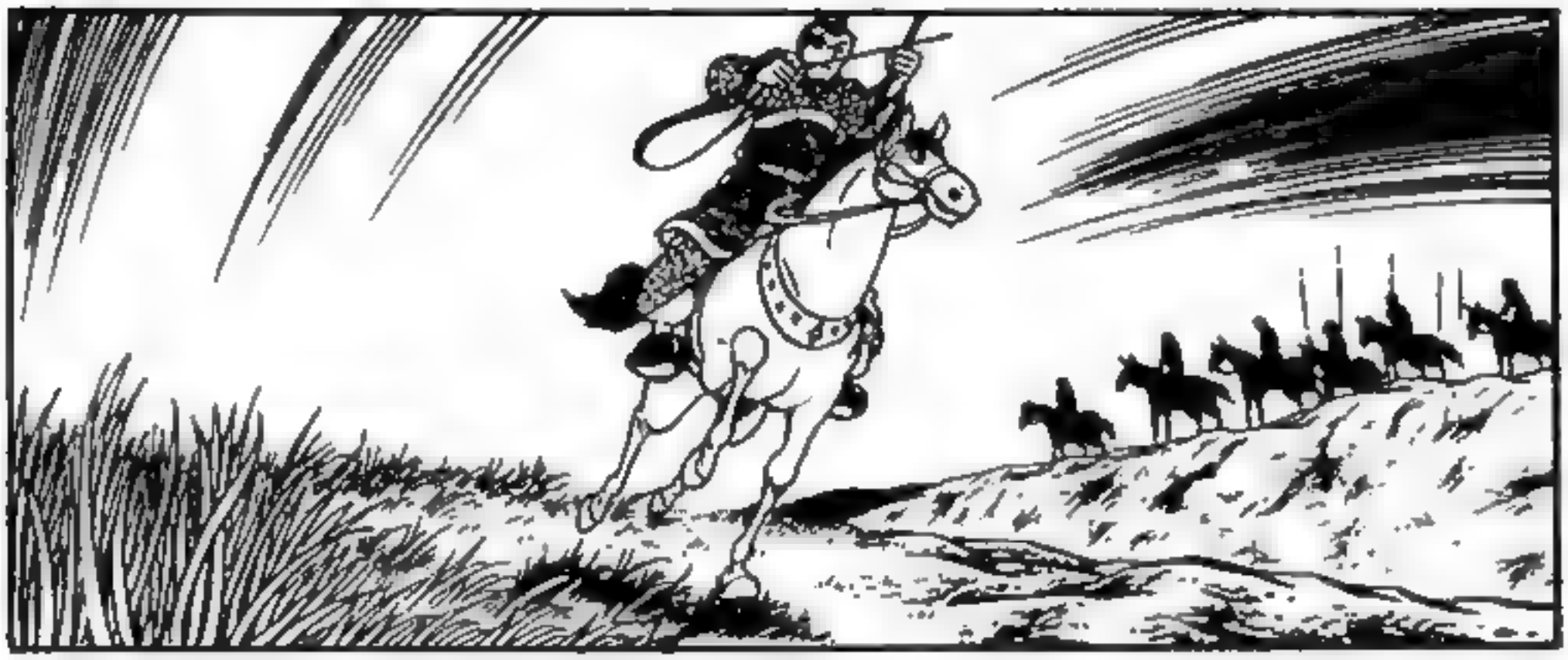


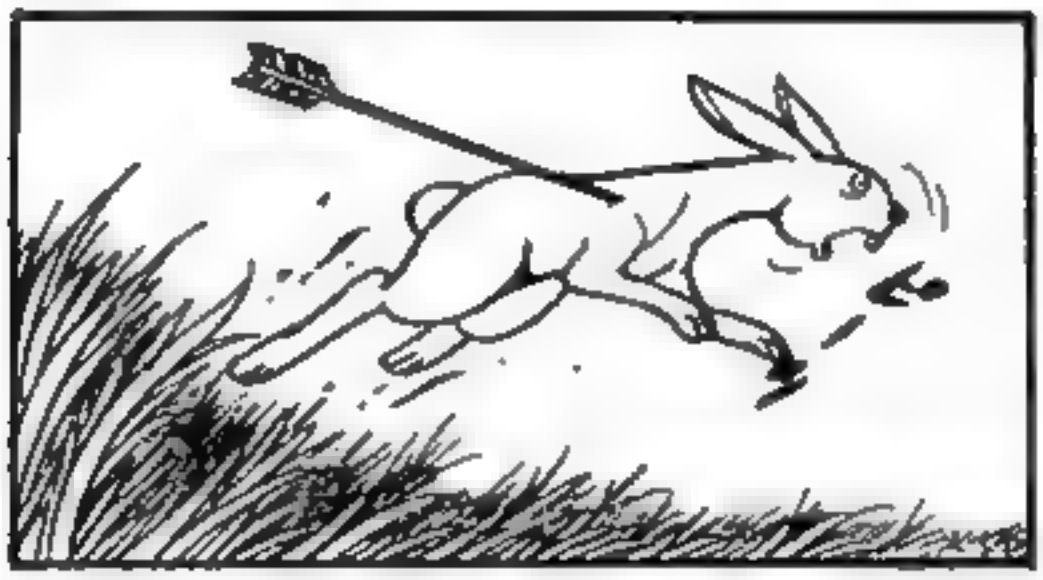




ALLOW ME, YOUR HIGHNESS.

IT'S A RABBIT! SOMEONE GET IT!





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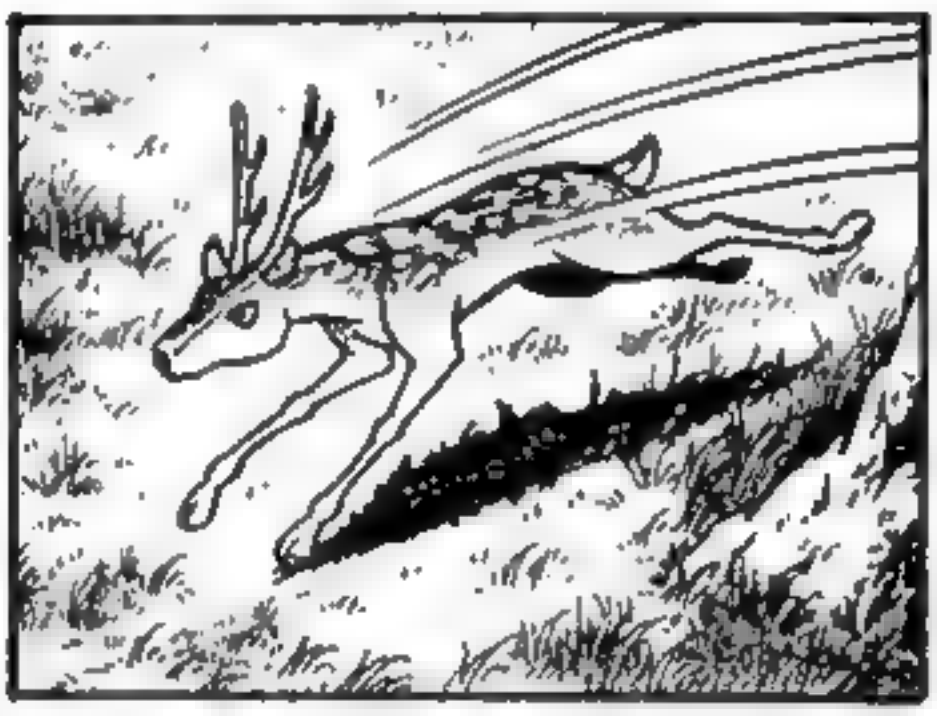
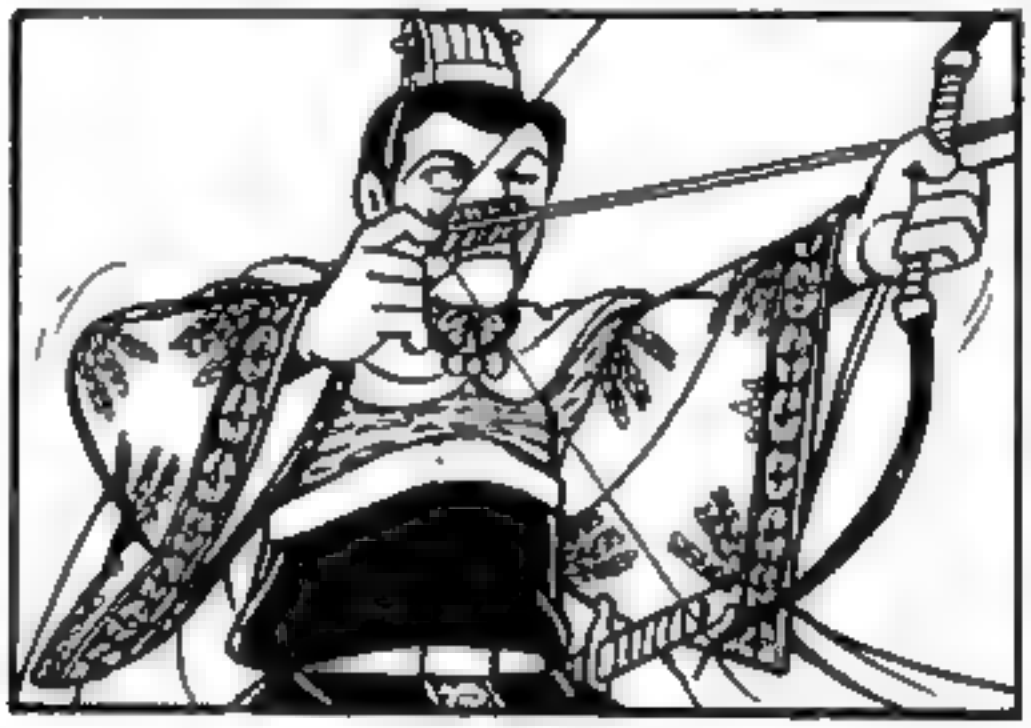
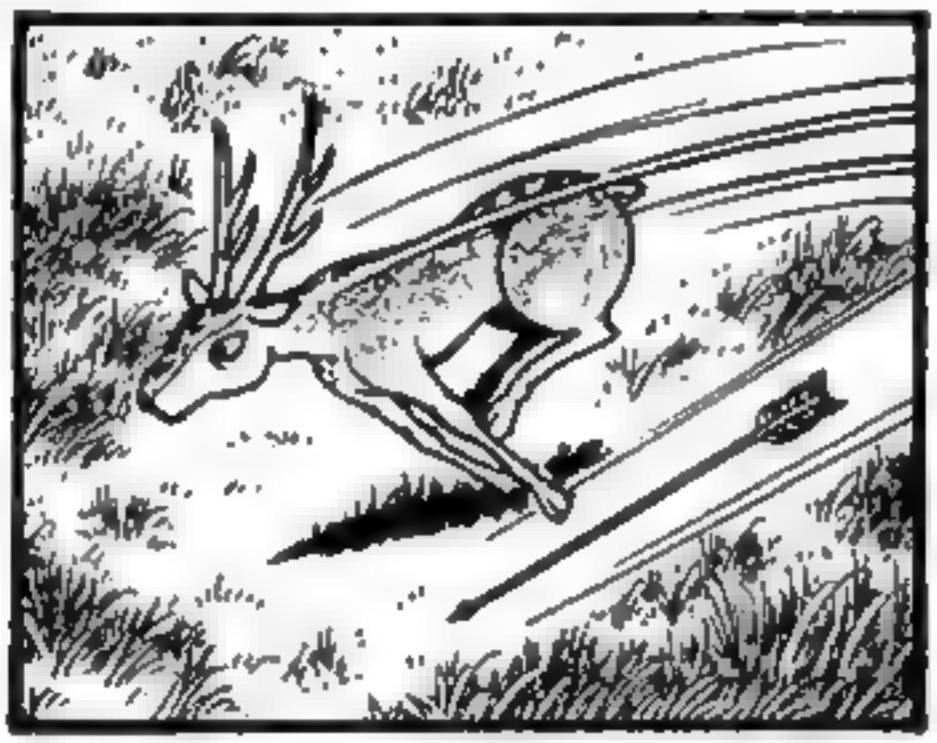


EXCELLENT SHOT, XUANDE.



OHH! IT'S A DEER!



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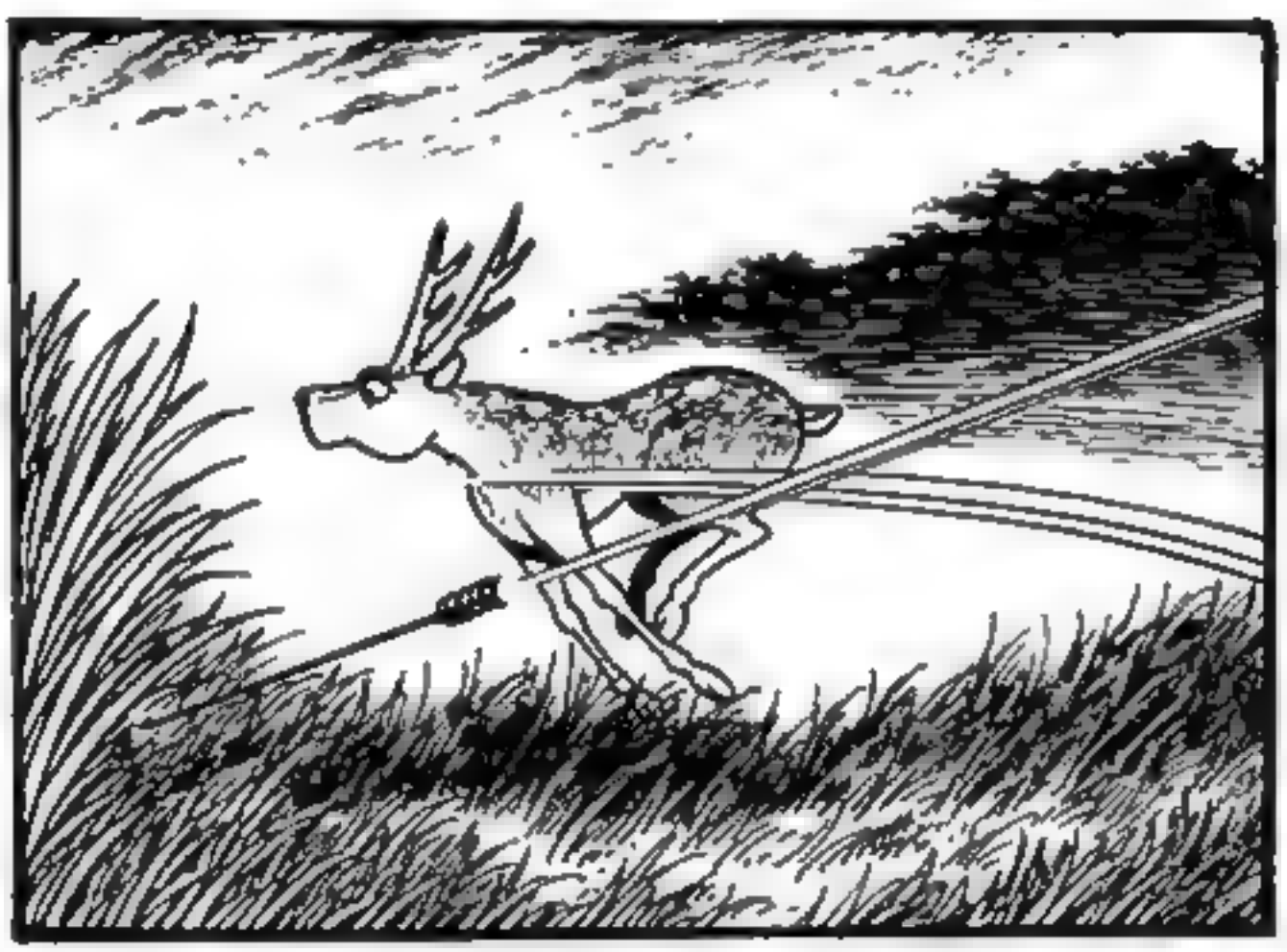
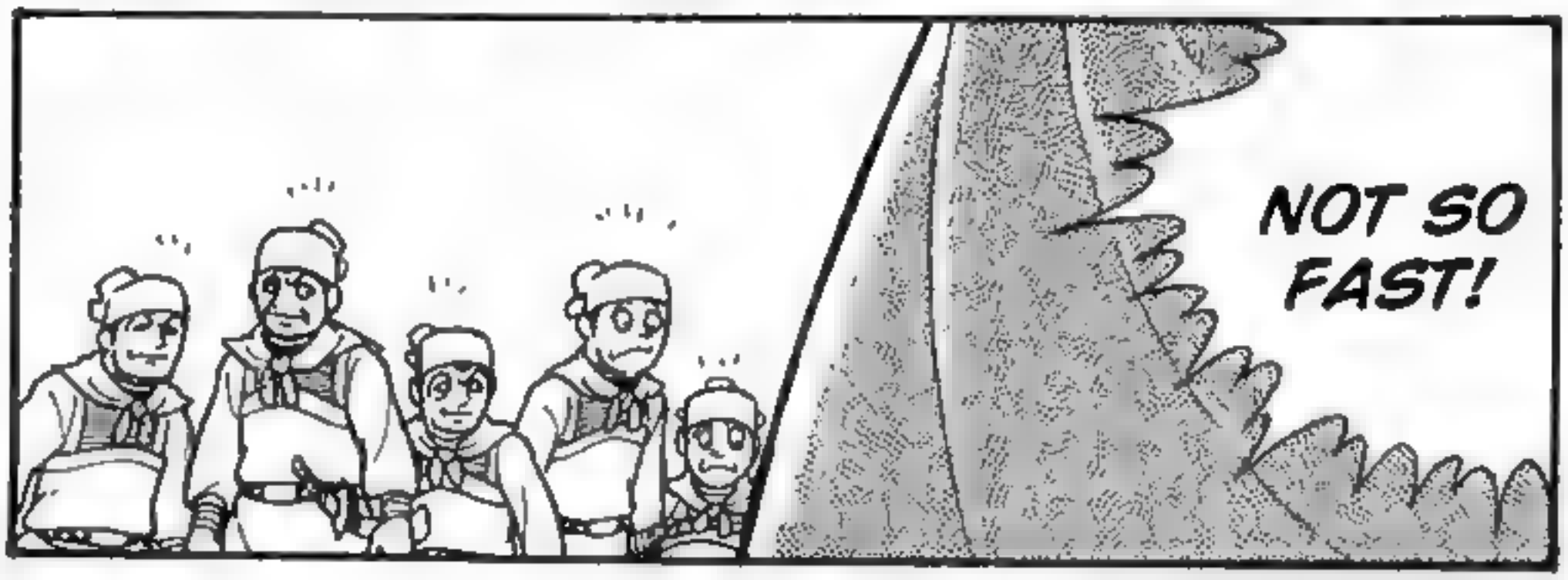


CAO CAO! SHOOT THAT DEER!

AGH!

HIS HIGHNESS HAS SUCCESS-FULLY SHOT THE DEER! LONG LIVE THE EMPEROR!

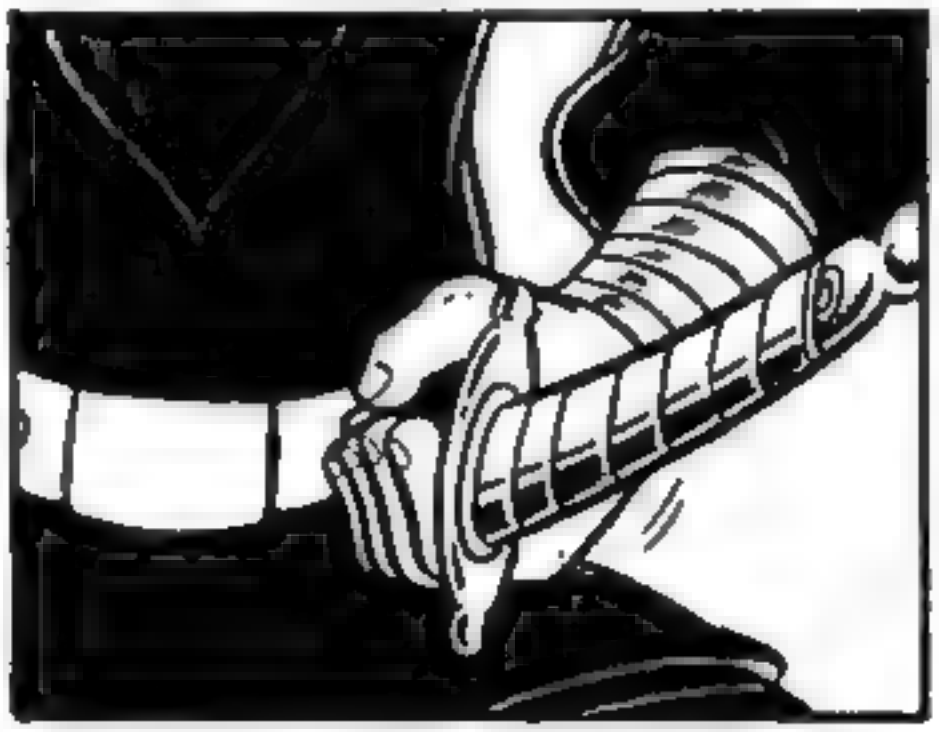
IT'S THE ROYAL ARROW!


NOT SO FAST!

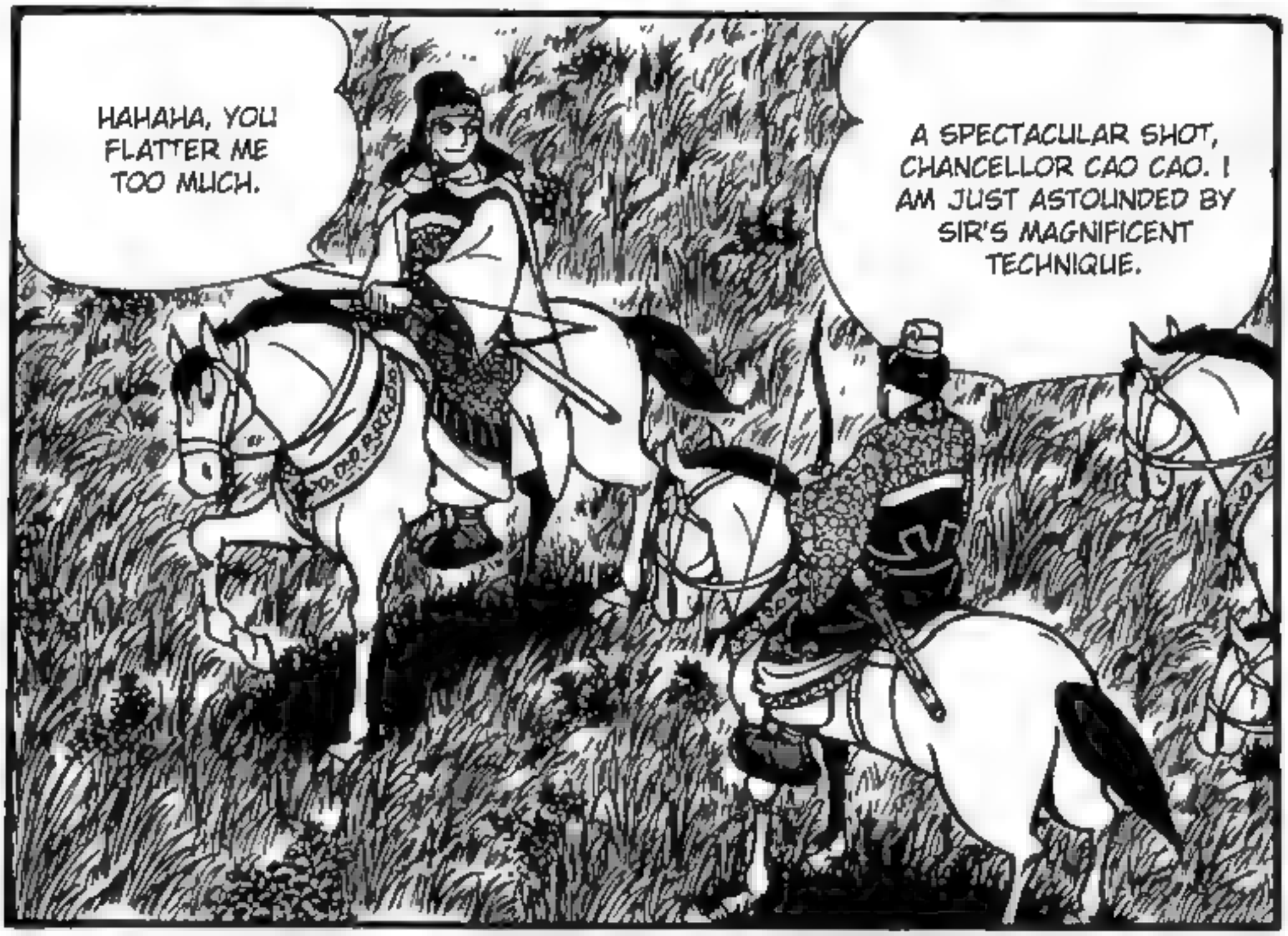
THE ONE WHO SHOT THAT DEER WAS ME!

THAT CAO CAO...! THERE'S A LIMIT TO HOW IMPU-DENT YOU CAN BE, NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE...!

THAT IS NOT HOW A PROPER RETAINER SHOULD BEHAVE...



WHAT DID YOU THINK OF MY SHOT?


HAHAHA, YOU FLATTER ME TOO MUCH.
A SPECTACULAR SHOT, CHANCELLOR CAO CAO. I AM JUST ASTOUNDED BY SIR'S MAGNIFICENT TECHNIQUE.

.....

GUAN YU, WHY DID YOU GRAB THE HILT OF YOUR SWORD DURING THE HUNT TODAY?

IF ANYONE SPOTTED YOU AT THAT MOMENT, GOD KNOWS WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED. YOU LET YOUR ANGER GET THE BEST OF YOU, THAT'S NOT VERY LIKE YOU.

DID BROTHER NOT FEEL ANYTHING WHEN CAO CAO DID WHAT HE DID?

EVER SINCE MOVING THE CAPITAL TO XUCHANG, CAO CAO HAS TAKEN CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE IMPERIAL COURT AND EVEN BELITTLED THE EMPEROR. THAT IS NOT THE PROPER CONDUCT OF A RETAINER.

I'M ACTUALLY PUZZLED AS TO WHY BROTHER STOPPED ME.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BROTHER, BUT I CANNOT LOOK THE OTHER WAY AND LET CAO CAO CONTINUE HIS TYRANNY.

AND TODAY, HE ARROGANTLY TRIED TO DISPLAY HOW SUPERIOR HE WAS TO THE EMPEROR.

BUT YOU MUST THINK MORE DEEPLY, GUAN YU.

YES, I KNOW. YOU HAVE A POINT...

AND IF THAT HAPPENED, THIS COUNTRY SHALL FALL INTO CHAOS ONCE MORE.

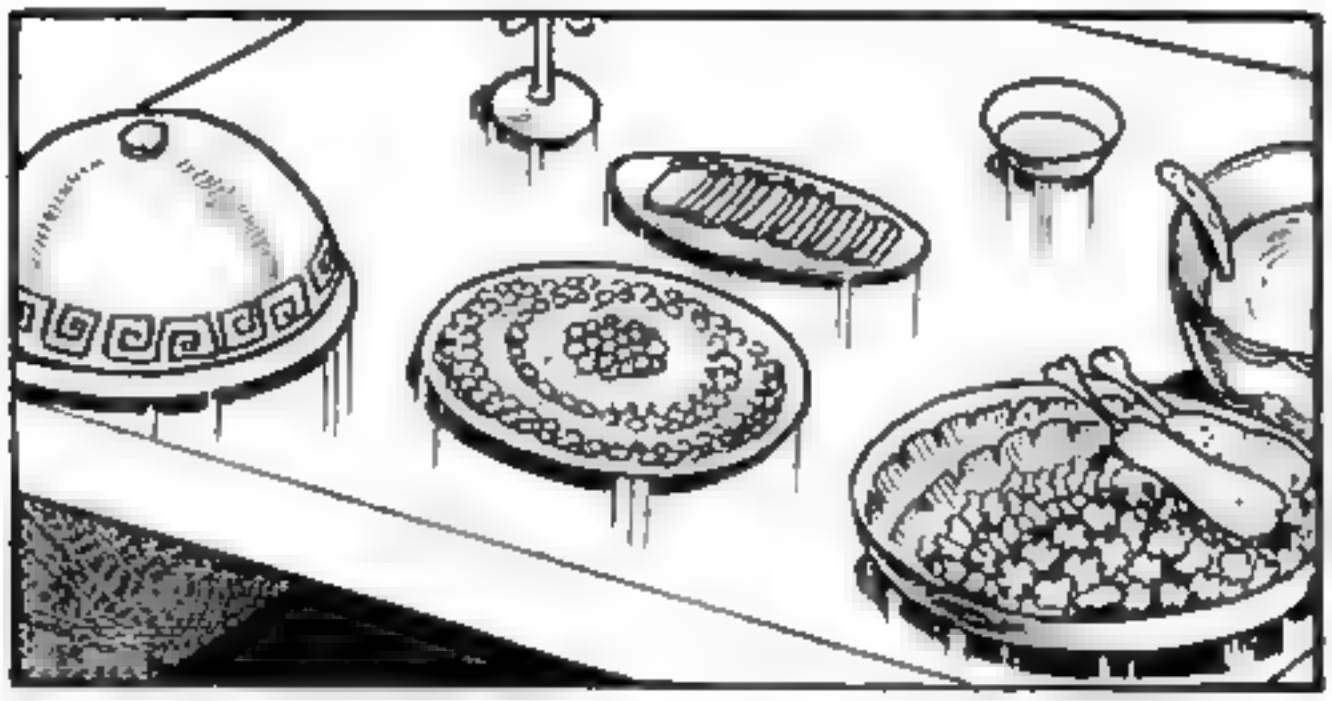
IF YOU CUT DOWN CAO CAO RIGHT THEN AND THERE, CAO CAO'S SUBORDINATES WOULD HAVE KILLED US IN RETURN.

IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE A 2ND OR 3RD CAO CAO APPEAR TO EACH BEGIN THEIR OWN TYRANNICAL RULE. SO WHAT WOULD KILLING CAO CAO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED?

PLEASE FORGIVE ME, BROTHER. I HAD NOT THOUGHT THAT FAR AHEAD.

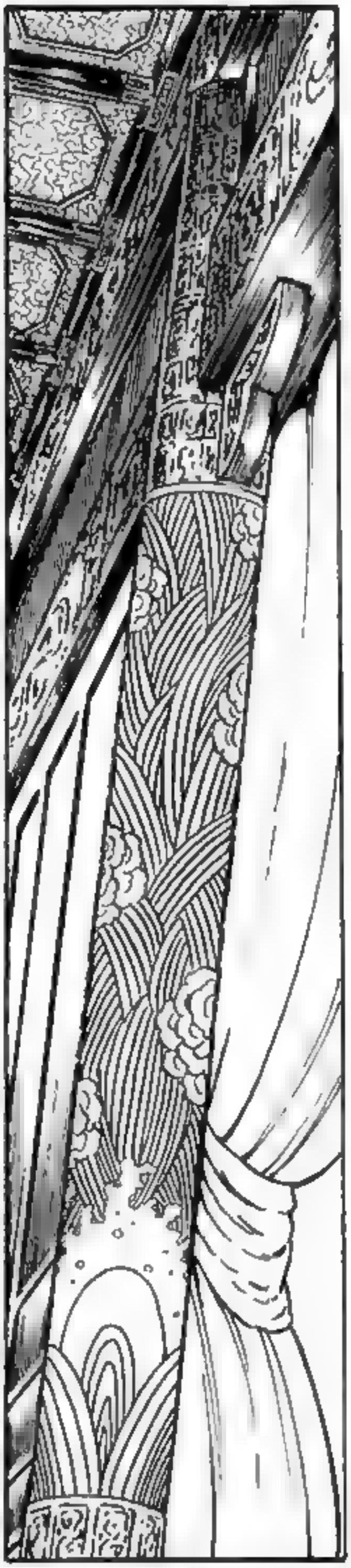
I MIGHT EXPECT SUCH SHORT-TEMPER FROM ZHANG FEI, BUT TO HAVE YOU ACT SO RASHLY IS TROUBLING.

MARK MY WORDS. AS LONG AS CAO CAO IS ALIVE, THIS WORLD WILL ONLY PLUNGE FURTHER INTO CHAOS.
ALTHOUGH BROTHER IS RIGHT, ONLY MISFORTUNE CAN COME OF LETTING CAO CAO LIVE ANOTHER DAY.



YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU'VE BARELY EATEN ANYTHING AT ALL. IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG?

AND WHAT TROUBLES YOUR HIGHNESS SO?
THE MORE I THINK, THE MORE I LOSE MY APPETITE...



I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN AT THE MERCY OF MY RETAINERS WHO WERE ONLY SELFISHLY OUT TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN POWER. DONG ZHUO, LI JUE, GUO SI, AND NOW CAO CAO...

LOOKING BACK, I HAVE NOT LIVED A SINGLE DAY TRULY AT PEACE.

THOUGH I DO NOT CARE IF I WERE TO DIE EVEN TOMORROW, I AM AFRAID THAT 400 YEARS OF OUR PROUD HAN DYNASTY MAY FINALLY COME TO A CLOSE...

EVER SINCE MOVING TO XUCHANG, CAO CAO HAS TAKEN OVER THE IMPERIAL COURT AND DOES AS HE PLEASES.

AND WHEN I THINK THAT...

I UNDERSTAND YOUR HIGHNESS'S WORRIES WELL. BUT THERE ARE STILL THOSE WHO REMAIN LOYAL TO YOUR HIGHNESS, AND I AM ONE OF THEM.

AH, FU WAN.

FATHER!

OF COURSE, YOUR HIGHNESS. HIS ACTIONS AT THE RECENT HUNT WAS INEXCUSABLE.

SO YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT CAO CAO.

Q-QUIET, FU WAN! THE PALACE IS FULL OF THOSE LOYAL TO CAO CAO!

TO SO BOLDLY CONFIRM HIS POWER AND INFLUENCE LIKE THAT... HE IS BOTH SHAMELESS AND TREASONOUS!

BUT BACK TO THE TOPIC AT HAND, IF SOMETHING IS NOT DONE SOON, YOUR HIGHNESS WILL BE ROBBED OF EVERYTHING BY CAO CAO.

YES, I AM AWARE OF THAT AS WELL WHICH IS WHY I HAVE ALREADY MADE SURE TO CLEAR THOSE PEOPLE FAR FROM THIS ROOM RIGHT NOW.

DONG CHENG?

HOW ABOUT GENERAL OF THE CAVALRY AND CHARIOTS, DONG CHENG?

YES, I KNOW BUT I AM POWERLESS. JUST WHO CAN I DEPEND UPON FOR HELP?

DONG CHENG IS A MOST LOYAL RETAINER. I AM CERTAIN THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO SECRETLY HELP YOUR HIGHNESS.

THAT NIGHT, EMPEROR XIAN WROTE A SECRET LETTER AND HID IT IN HIS GIRDLE

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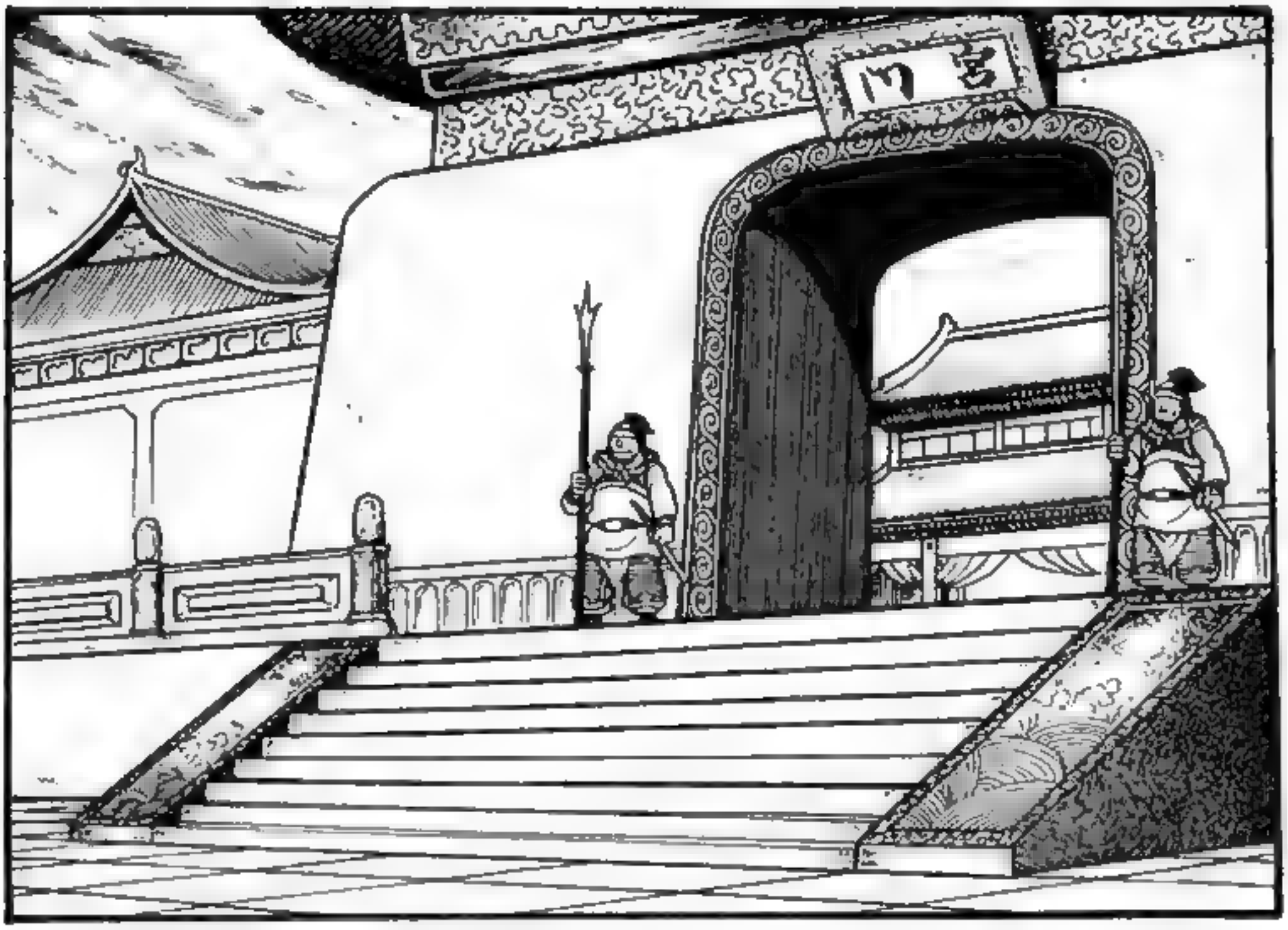


YES, THANK YOU FOR COMING, DONG CHENG. IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU STILL IN GOOD HEALTH.
DID YOUR HIGHNESS CALL FOR ME?

THINKING BACK, IF IT WEREN'T FOR LOYAL RETAINERS SUCH AS YOU, 400 YEARS OF HAN WOULD HAVE ALREADY COME TO AN END.

I WAS TALKING LAST NIGHT WITH MY WIFE, EMPRESS WU, OF HOW WE WERE UNDER LI JUE AND GUO SI'S TYRANNY BUT WERE SAVED BECAUSE OF YOUR VALIANT DEEDS.

COME WITH ME.

IF I MAY ASK, WHERE DID OUR SUPREME ANCESTOR START AND HOW DID HE CREATE OUR GREAT HAN DYNASTY?

HERE LIES THE PORTRAITS OF MY ANCESTORS BEGINNING FROM OUR SUPREME ANCESTOR*.

YES.

*LIU BANG

I WOULD LIKE TO HEAR IT AGAIN, SO PLEASE.

DOES YOUR HIGHNESS MOCK ME? EVEN A CHILD WOULD KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.

JUST WHAT EXACTLY DOES HIS HIGHNESS WANT TO HEAR...?

HE BEGAN AS A PRECINCT MASTER OF SISHANG, AND HIS SLAYING OF THE WHITE SERPENT IN MT. MANGDANG WITH A 3 CHI* SWORD MARKED HIS RISE AGAINST THE QIN DYNASTY. HE THEN DESTROYED QIN IN ONLY 3 YEARS AND ANNHILATED CHU IN JUST 5 YEARS TO CREATE THE HAN DYNASTY THAT HAS LASTED FOR 400 YEARS AS OF NOW.

*CHI TRADITIONAL CHINESE UNIT OF LENGTH APPROX 23CM BACK DURING HAN DYNASTY

I AM JUST A MERE PUPPET OF CAO CAO ...

I AM ASHAMED OF HOW WORTHLESS I AM, COMPARED TO OUR SUPREME ANCESTOR.

WHAT SADDENS YOUR HIGHNESS SO?

THINKING BACK, I DON'T THINK I HAVE EVER APPROPRIATELY REWARDED YOU JUSTLY FOR YOUR DEEDS.

WHY, OF COURSE, YOUR HIGHNESS.

DONG CHENG, I PRAY THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BE OF GREAT SUPPORT TO ME.

PLEASE, ACCEPT THIS GIRDLE OF MINE.

HMM? HIS HIGHNESS HAS SUMMONED DONG CHENG?

I DO NOT KNOW, MY LORD, BUT DONG CHENG IS STILL AN INFLUENTIAL MAN. MY LORD MUST BE WARY OF HIM...

JUST WHY WOULD HE SUDDENLY CALL UP AN OLD MAN WHO ONLY SHUTS HIMSELF INSIDE HIS HOME ALL DAY?

YES...

HIS HIGHNESS WAS ACTING VERY STRANGE TODAY...

I WONDER IF THERE'S SOMETHING MORE TO THIS GIRDLE THAN WHAT MEETS THE EYE...?

AND TO GIVE ME HIS GIRDLE OUT OF THE BLUE...

GOOD DAY, DONG CHENG.

SO WHY IS IT THAT HIS HIGHNESS HAS SUDDENLY SUMMONED YOU?

GOOD DAY, CHANCELLOR CAO CAO.

HMM? AND WHAT IS THAT?

HIS ROYAL GIRDLE...?

AH, HIS HIGHNESS HAS PRESENTED ME WITH HIS ROYAL GIRDLE.

HIS HIGHNESS SAID IT WAS A REWARD FOR MY ACTIONS IN HELPING HIM FLEE FROM LI JUE AND GUO SI IN CHANG'AN.

AND WHY DID HE GIVE YOU THAT?

WELL, I WAS TOO OVERJOYED BY HIS GIFT TO WONDER ABOUT SUCH THINGS.

BUT THAT HAPPENED SO LONG AGO. HE JUST HAPPENED TO REWARD YOU NOW OF ALL TIMES...?

BY THE WAY, WOULD YOU MIND SHOWING ME THAT GIRDLE?

HMM, YES, OF COURSE.

IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG...?

THANK YOU.

NO, OF COURSE NOT, CHANCELLOR.

SO THIS IS THE ROYAL GIRDLE THAT HIS HIGH-NESS WEARS...

WHAT DO YOU THINK? DOES IT FIT ME?

HAHA, A HARM-LESS JOKE.

DONG CHENG, WILL YOU ALLOW ME TO HAVE THIS GIRDLE? I SHALL GIVE YOU ANYTHING YOU WISH IN RETURN.

HMM, SO YOU FEEL THAT STRONGLY ABOUT IT, DO YOU...?

I DARE NOT GIVE AWAY A GIFT THAT HIS HIGHNESS HAS PERSONALLY BESTOWED UPON ME.

O-OF COURSE NOT...!

I WONDER, THERE ISN'T SOME SECRET PLOT CONNECTED WITH THIS GIRDLE NOW, IS THERE?

OH NO, NO. I WAS MERELY JESTING. WHAT WOULD THE PEOPLE SAY WHEN THEY HEAR THAT I TOOK OTHERS' GIFTS FOR MYSELF?

BUT IF CHANCELLOR CAO CAO IS SO SET UPON THE ROYAL GIRDLE, I SHALL RELUCTANTLY GIVE IT...

THANK YOU, SIR.

I HOPE YOU CHERISH IT WELL.

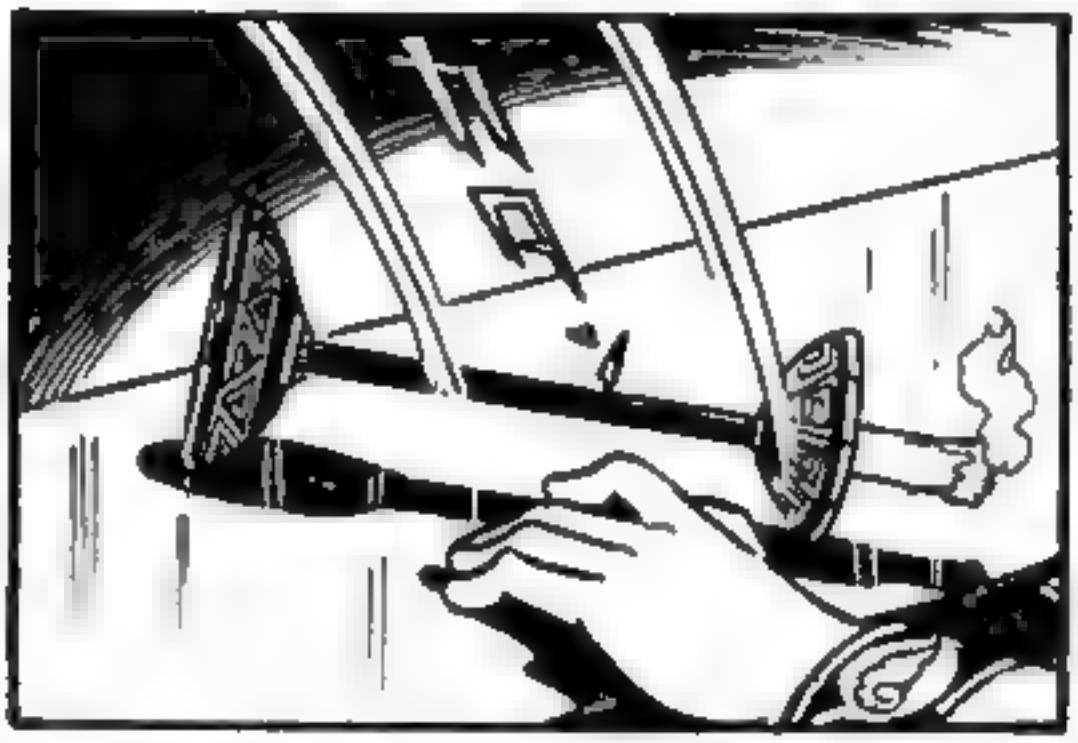
.....

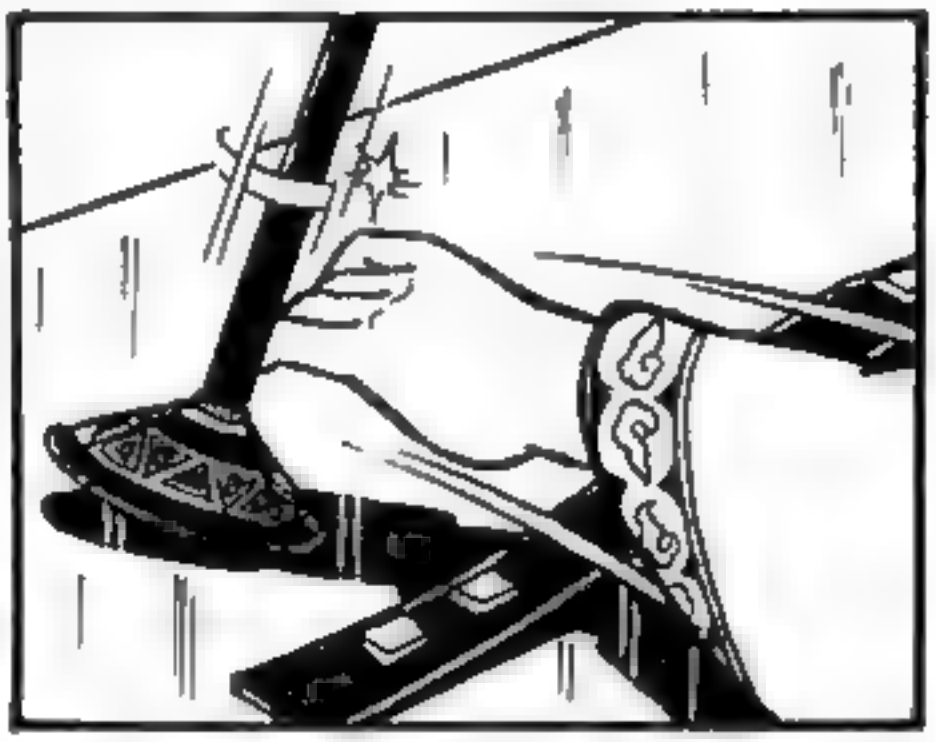
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING ODD ABOUT THIS...

I SHALL EXAMINE IT CLOSELY AGAIN.

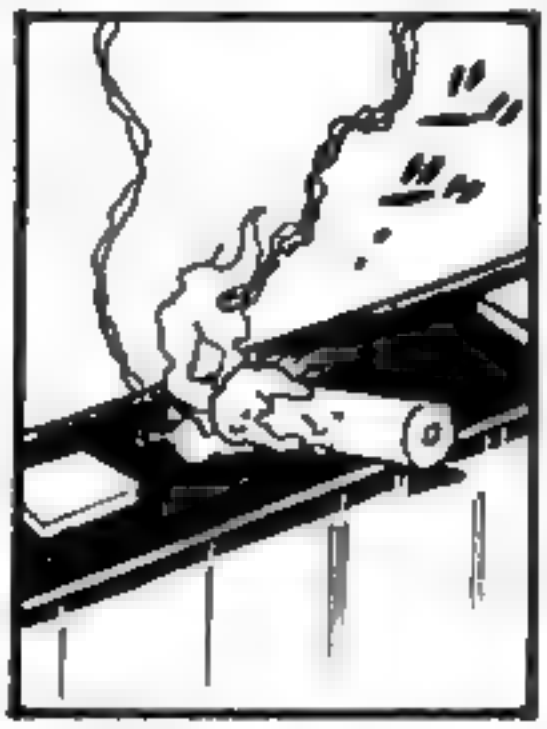
NO, HIS HIGHNESS WAS ACTING MUCH TOO STRANGE. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING MORE TO THIS GIRDLE.

AM I JUST OVERTHINKING THINGS...?





AHH!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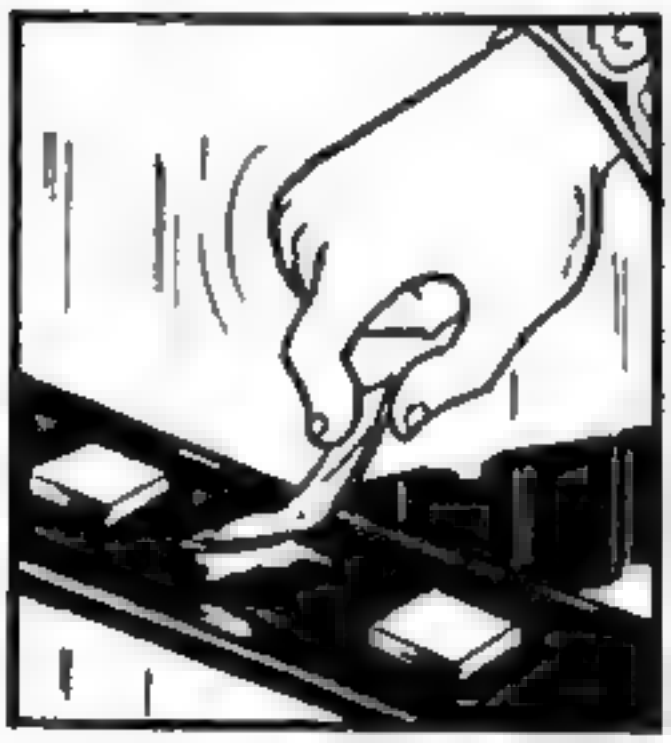
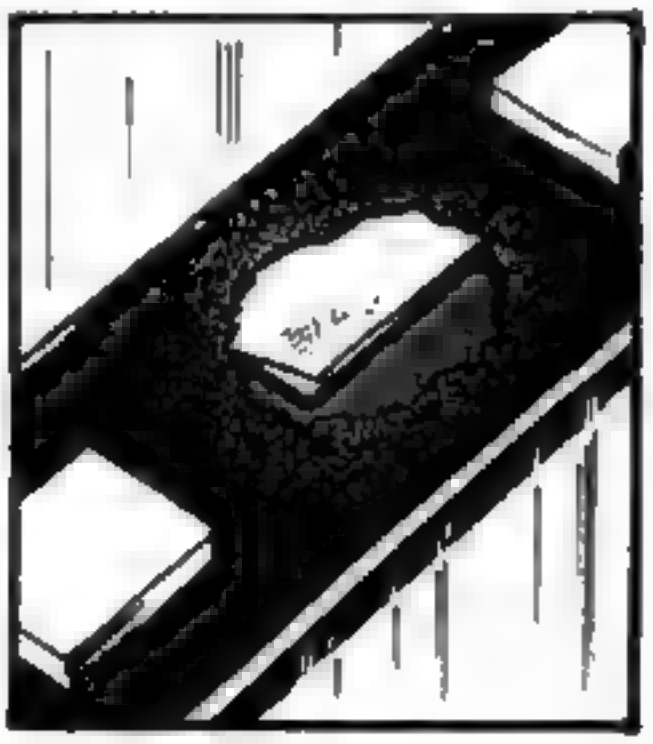
HMM?

HMM?

W-WHAT HAVE I DONE...!



T-THIS IS...?



CAO CAO'S ACTIONS ARE BECOMING EVEN MORE UNBEARABLE, DAY BY DAY.

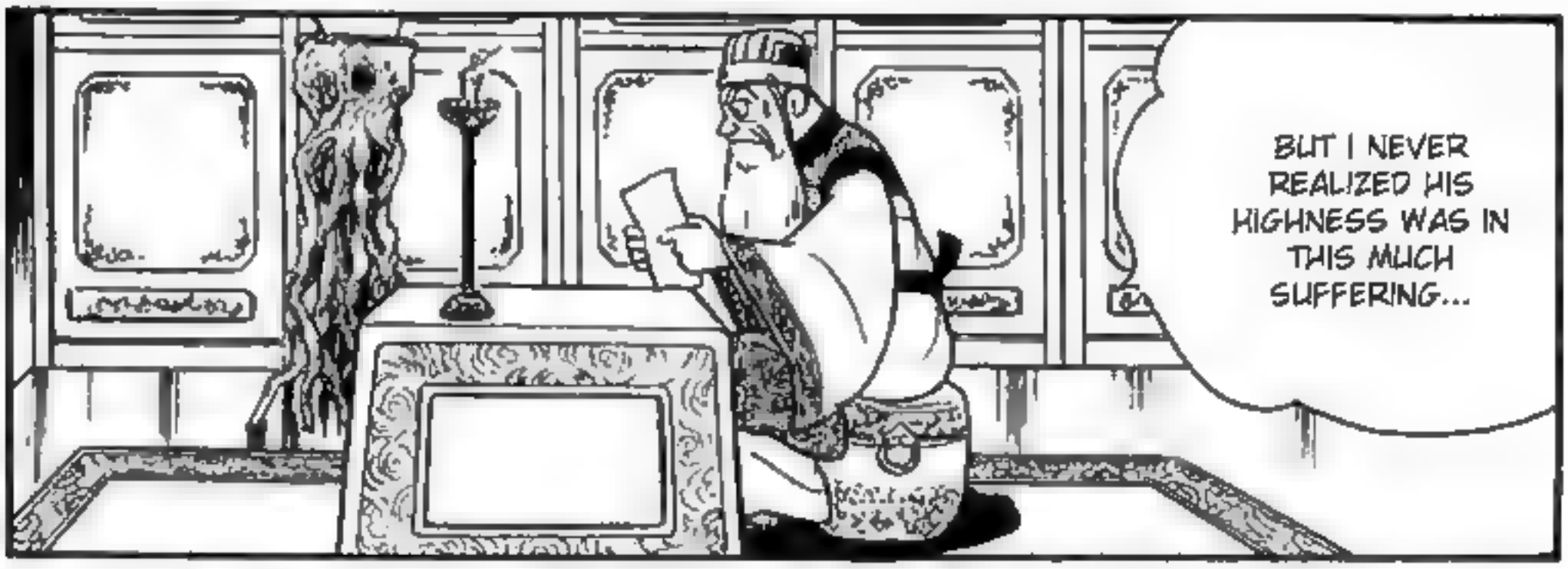
IT'S WRITTEN IN BLOOD!

YOU ARE A MOST LOYAL AND WELL-RESPECTED ELDER STATESMEN WHO HAS AIDED ME GREATLY, TIME AND TIME AGAIN. I THEREBY BELIEVE YOU ARE THE RIGHT MAN TO ENTRUST THE TASK OF GATHERING OTHER LOYAL MEN TO RID THE IMPERIAL COURT OF THOSE WICKED INDIVIDUALS AND THEREBY RESTORING PEACE AND STABILITY TO OUR HAN.
I SIGN THIS DECREE IN BLOOD AND LEAVE IT TO YOUR HANDS.

ALL THE POWER AND RESPONSI-BILITIES DIVIDED AMONG MYSELF AND THE ENTIRE IMPERIAL COURT HAS BEEN SEIZED SOLELY BY CAO CAO. I CAN ONLY WEEP WHEN I THINK OF ALL THE GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS OF MY SUPREME ANCESTOR AND HOW PATHETIC HIS DESCENDANT HAS BECOME...

I WONDER IF A DECREPIT OLD MAN LIKE ME COULD ACCOM-PLISH SUCH A TASK...

THIS IS A SECRET DECREE, ORDERING ME TO ASSASSINATE CAO CAO...


BUT I NEVER REALIZED HIS HIGHNESS WAS IN THIS MUCH SUFFERING...

I MUST FULFILL THIS TASK NO MATTER WHAT...!

HE MUST WEEP TEARS OF REGRET AND FRUSTRATION EVERY NIGHT FOR BEING CAO CAO'S MERE PUPPET...

I HAVE ALREADY LIVED A LONG LIFE, I SHAN'T BE AFRAID OF RISKING MY LIFE...

BLOOD SIGNED PLEDGE

PLEASE FORGIVE ME MINISTER WANG ZIFU, BUT MASTER DONG CHENG HAS SHUT HIMSELF INSIDE THE STUDY ROOM LATELY AND REFUSES TO MEET WITH ANYONE.
HOW COULD HE NOT HAVE TIME TO SEE ME, AFTER I, HIS OLD FRIEND, TOOK THE TIME OUT OF HIS BUSY LIFE AS A MINSTER AND CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO SEE HIM?
IS HE BUSY RIGHT NOW OR SOMETHING?

WELL, THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO AND SEE FOR MYSELF.

I AM NOT EXACTLY SURE WHAT MY MASTER IS UP TO.

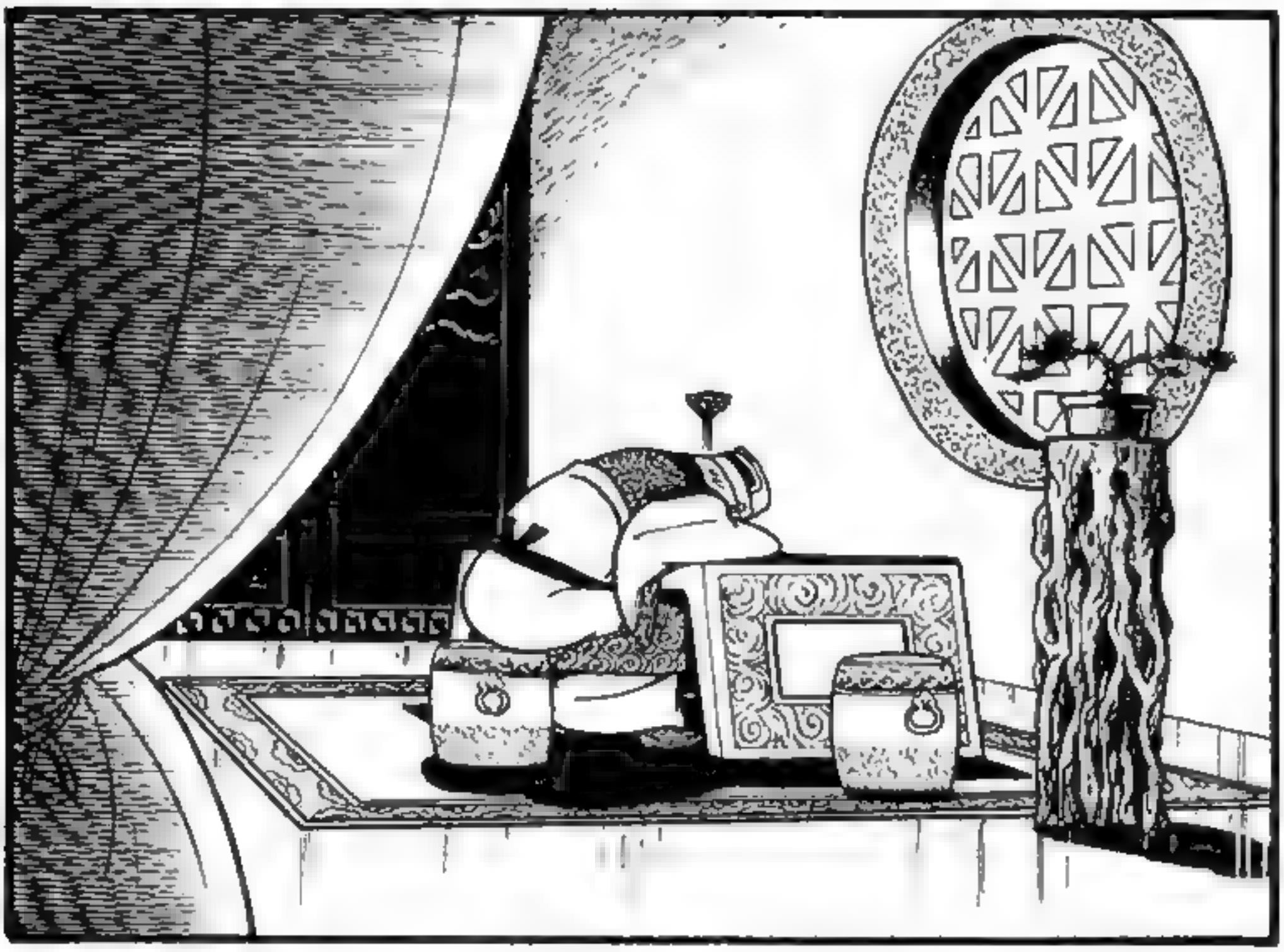
IS HE RESEARCHING SOMETHING?

HAHA, DO NOT WORRY. DONG CHENG AND I ARE VERY CLOSE FRIENDS. I ASSURE YOU THAT HE WON'T BE MAD.

NO, PLEASE SIR. MY MASTER WILL BE VERY ANGRY IF SOMEONE WERE TO INTRUDE UPON HIM IN THE STUDY ROOM.

IS HE NOT HERE...?

DONG CHENG!



FALLING ASLEEP WHILE IN YOUR STUDIES? JUST WHAT IS IT THAT YOU'RE SO BUSY WITH?

MNN...

THE EMPER-OR'S...!

*朕 PRONOUN THAT EMPERORS AND ROYALTY USE TO REFER TO THEMSELVES

AH, WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE IT IS TO SEE YOU, WANG ZIFU.

YOU'RE FINALLY UP, I SEE.

WHAT WAS THAT YOU WERE READING JUST NOW?

THIS OLD BODY OF MINE TIRES EASILY AND I FIND MYSELF EASILY FALLING ASLEEP WHEN I READ.

AH YES, IT IS BECAUSE I AM READING NIGHT AND DAY THESE DAYS.

WELL IN ANY CASE, YOU SEEM VERY FATIGUED.

AH... IT'S NOTHING.

JUST WHAT WOULD AN OLD MAN LIKE ME GAIN FROM READING SUCH A BOOK?

WHAT!?

IS THAT SO? JUST WHAT ARE YOU SO BUSY READING? MAYBE YOU'RE BUSY STUDYING SUN TZU'S ART OF WAR OR THE LIKE?

BUT IT'S WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE.

W-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?

I'M SURE IF CHANCELLOR CAO CAO WERE TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR PLANS, YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY WILL BE EXECUTED.

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? AND WHAT PLAN DO YOU MEAN?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF I TOLD CAO CAO ABOUT YOUR PLAN?

IF WE AREN'T FRIENDS INTIMATE ENOUGH TO SHARE SECRETS TO EACH OTHER, IT IS BETTER THAT I ENSURE MY SAFETY BY SELLING YOU OUT TO CAO CAO.

I BELIEVED YOU AND I WERE THE CLOSEST OF FRIENDS BUT IT SEEMS IT WAS ONLY I WHO BELIEVED THAT.

HAVEN'T YOU AND YOUR FAMILY BEEN INDEBTED TO OUR GREAT HAN AS WELL? OR HAVE YOU SHAMELESSLY FORGOTTEN YOUR DEBTS?

W-WAIT! IF YOU DO THAT, THEN IT WILL MEAN THE DEATH OF HAN!

HAHA, DO NOT WORRY. THAT WAS ALL JUST A JOKE.

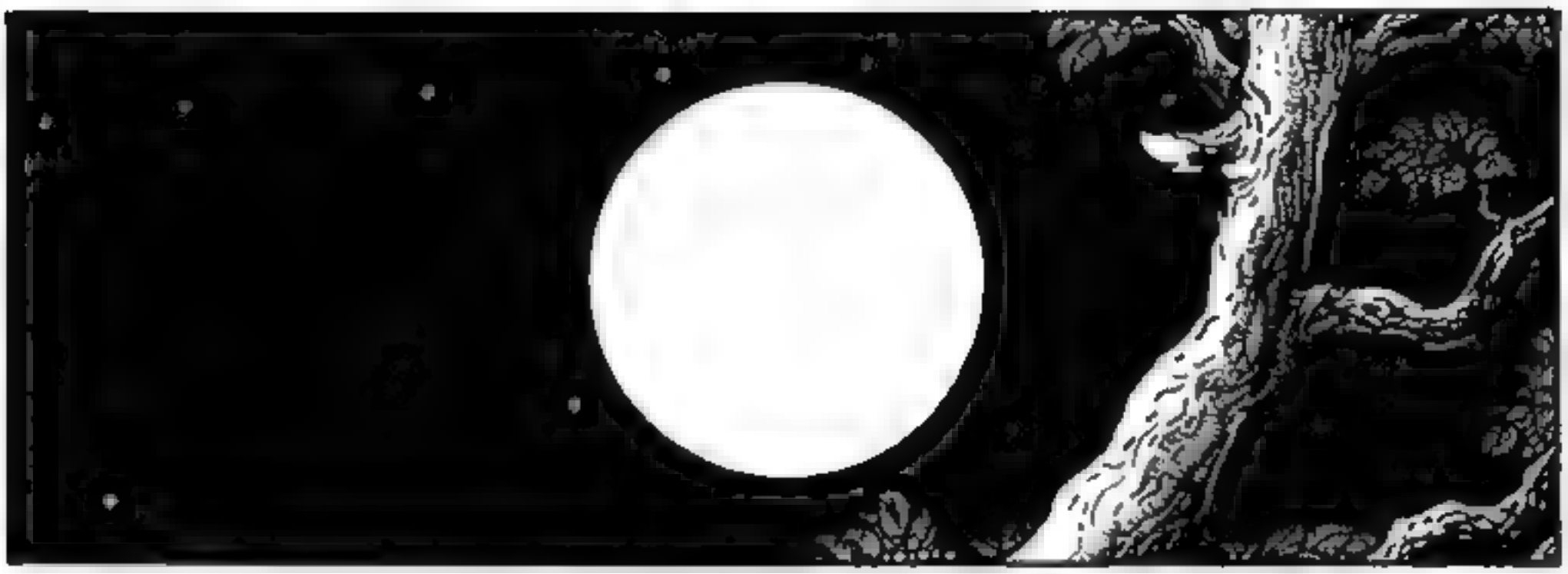
FORGIVE ME.

I HAVE DEFINITELY NOT FORGOTTEN MY DEBTS TO OUR GREAT HAN AND HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED MYSELF TO BE A MOST LOYAL RETAINER. I WAS MERELY UPSET TO SEE YOU WORRIED SO MUCH ABOUT A SECRET MATTER WHICH YOU COULDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO TELL YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND.

BUT IT WAS A VERY DANGEROUS MATTER THAT I DID NOT WANT TO INVOLVE OTHERS IN IF POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU, OLD FRIEND.

BUT I SHALL TELL YOU EVERYTHING.



BUT WE CANNOT ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK WITH JUST THE TWO OF US. WE NEED MORE HELP.

YES, HIS HIGHNESS IS SURROUNDED BY CAO CAO'S MEN AT ALMOST ALL HOURS. I'M SURE HE MUST HAVE HAD TO BOTTLE UP ALL HIS SADNESS AND ANGER INSIDE.

TO THINK THAT HIS HIGHNESS WAS SUFFERING THAT MUCH...

WHAT ABOUT GENERAL WU ZILAN? HE IS A LOYAL MAN AND ALSO A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE.

THEN LET US SET A DATE AND TALK TO THEM IN PRIVATE.

IS THAT SO? I HAD COMMANDER CHONG JI AND COURT COUNSELOR WU SHI IN MIND.

THEN I SHALL SIGN FIRST...

HMM... GOOD IDEA.
WE SHOULD MAKE A PLEDGE THAT ALL THE FUTURE MEMBERS OF OUR CAUSE CAN SIGN. AND LET THE MEMBERS STAMP A SEAL OF BLOOD JUST AS HIS HIGHNESS HAS DONE.

YES, THANK YOU.
IT WOULD BE BEST IF YOU STAYED HERE TONIGHT.

I WONDER HOW MANY WILL JOIN OUR CAUSE ...?

IT IS ALREADY VERY LATE.

WANG ZIFU, WAKE UP!

THE TWO MEN I MENTIONED LAST NIGHT, CHONG JI AND WU SHI, HAVE COME TO VISIT ME!

YOU WAKE UP VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING, DONG CHENG.

YES.

BOTH OF THEM ARE HERE RIGHT NOW!?

GOOD. I SHALL HIDE BEHIND THE SCREENS UNTIL WE CAN SEE THEIR TRUE NATURES.

I AM PLANNING TO TELL THEM ABOUT EVERYTHING.

IF THIS PLAN WERE TO LEAK OUT, THEN IT SHALL MEAN THE DEATH OF HAN. I MUST TAKE MANY PRECAUTIONS...

EXCUSE US FOR COMING SO UNEXPECTEDLY.

AH, IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU COME VISIT.

AH, YES. IT WAS QUITE REFRESHING TO GO OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I LAST DID THAT.

BY THE WAY, YOU WENT OUT ON THE RECENT HUNT AS WELL, RIGHT?

I'M TALKING ABOUT CAO CAO'S ACTIONS, OF COURSE!

WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN?

DID YOU... FEEL ANY-THING FROM THAT HUNT?

Q-QUIET! WHAT IF SOMEONE WERE TO OVERHEAR YOU!?

TO STEAL THE ROYAL BOW AND ARROW AS HE DID ON THAT DAY... THAT IS NOT HOW A PROPER RETAINER ACTS. IT IS PROOF THAT CAO CAO DOES NOT THINK OF HIS HIGHNESS AS THE TRUE EMPEROR OF HAN!

ARE YOU AFRAID OF CAO CAO THAT MUCH!?

YES, THAT IS RIGHT. THERE ARE STILL OTHERS WHO REMAIN LOYAL TO HAN AND WE HAVE RIGHTEOUSNESS SUPPORTING OUR CAUSE.

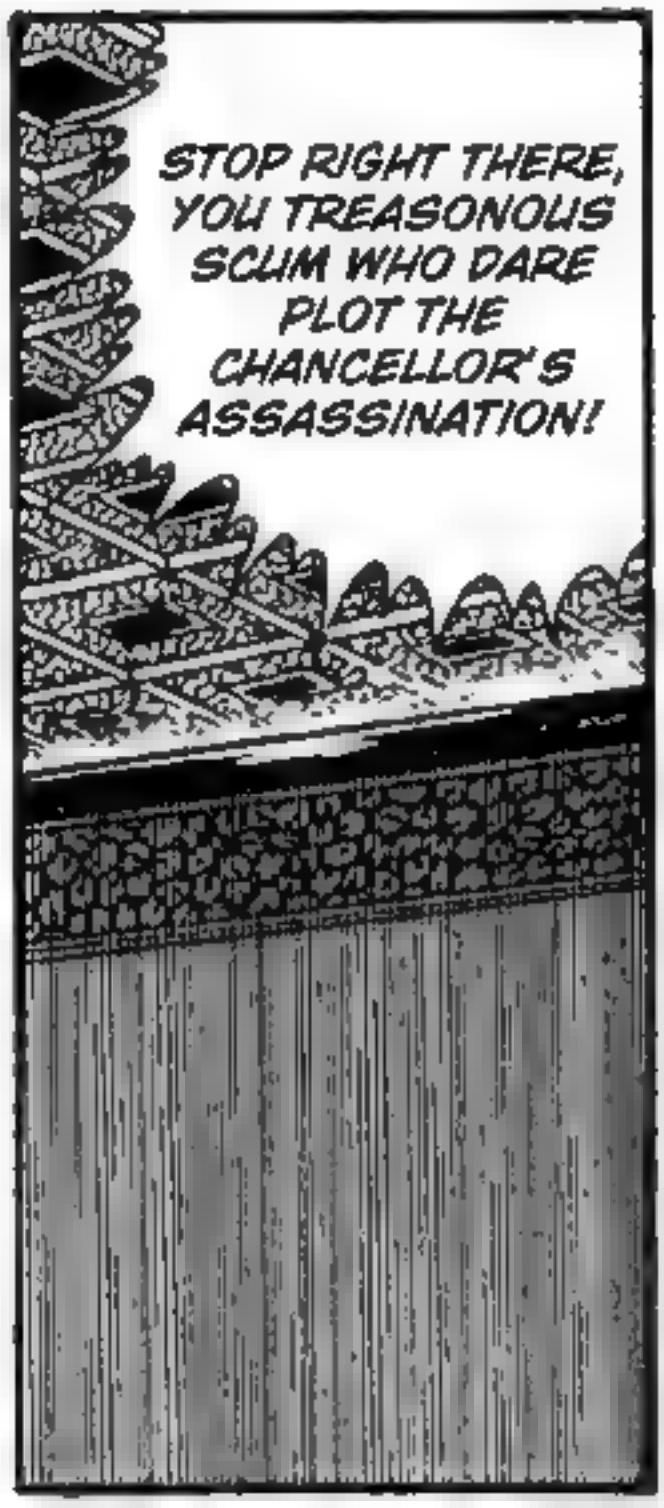
CAO CAO MAY BE POWERFUL BUT A VILLAIN IS STILL JUST A VILLAIN.

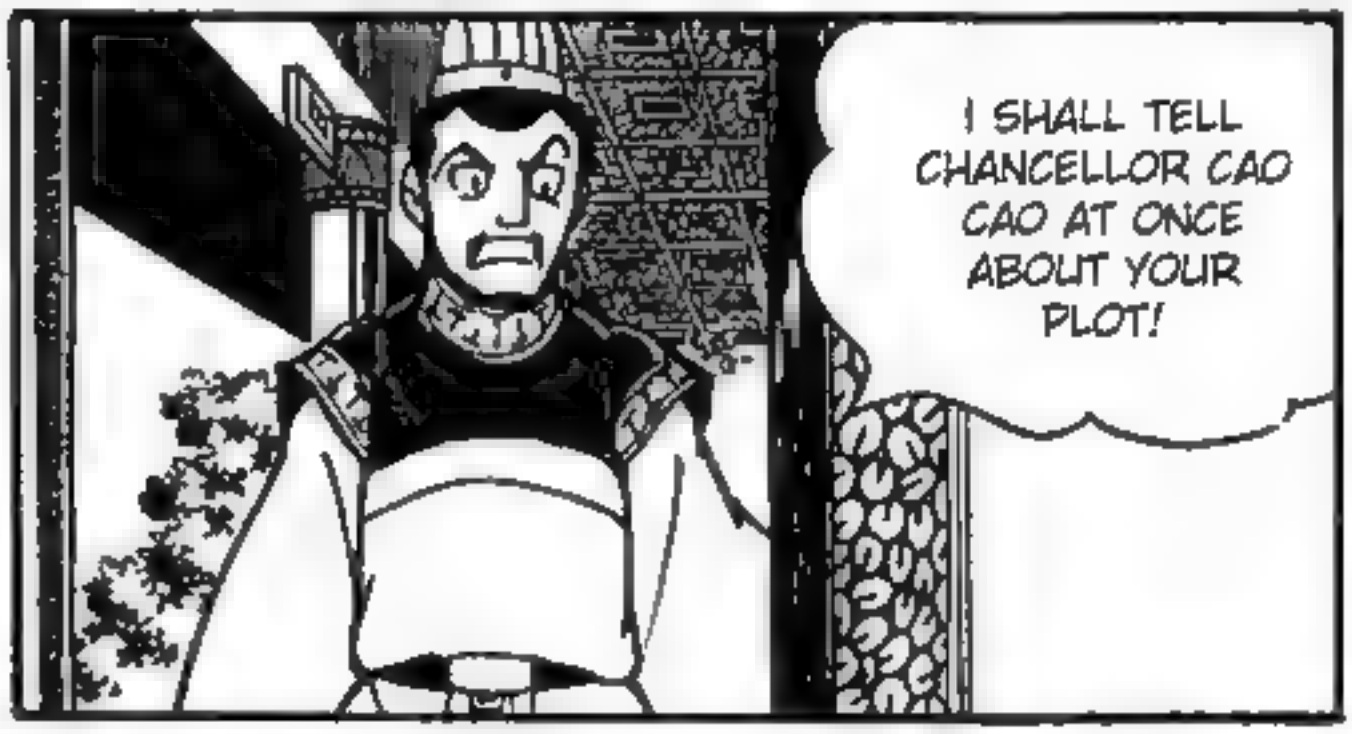
I HEARD THAT HIS HIGHNESS RECENTLY SUMMONED YOU TO TALK PRIVATELY ABOUT SOMETHING. DID HE HAPPEN TO TELL YOU ANYTHING IMPORTANT?

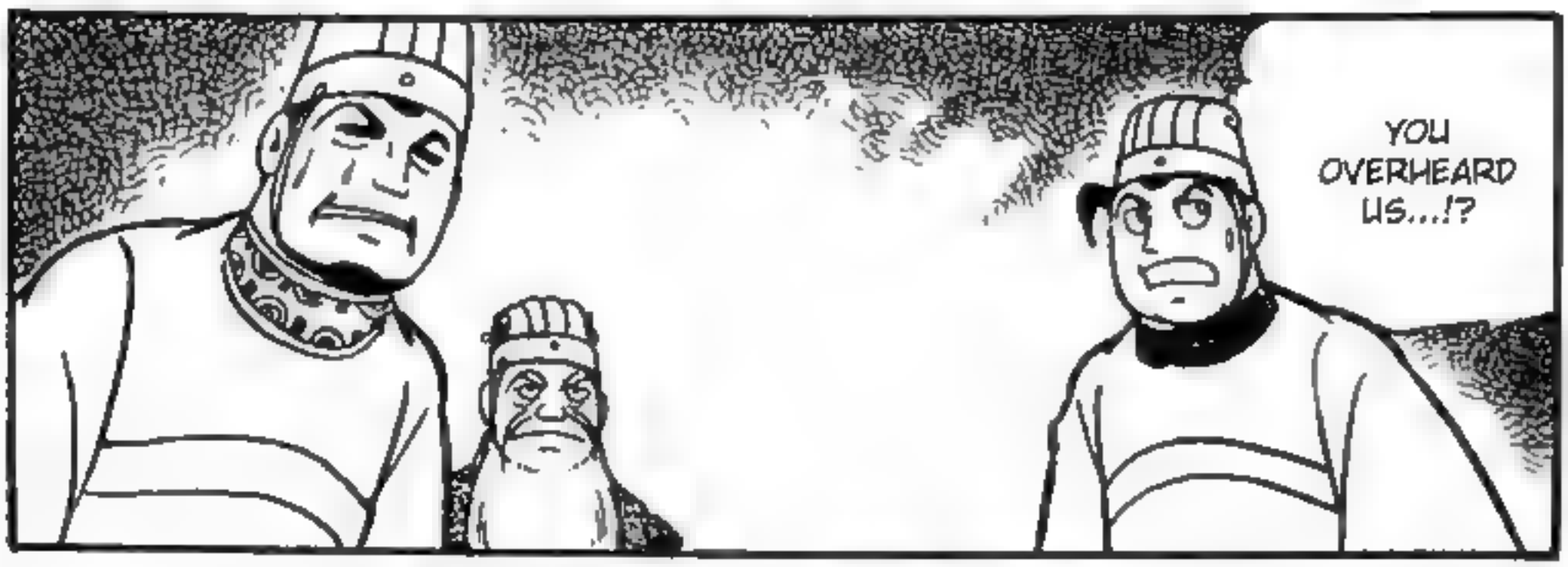
W-WHY DO YOU ASK ALL OF A SUDDEN...?

WE HAVE COME TODAY TO YOUR HOME TO ASK HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT CAO CAO.

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TELL US ANYTHING. WE DO NOT FEAR DEATH AND WILL GLADLY HELP OUT...

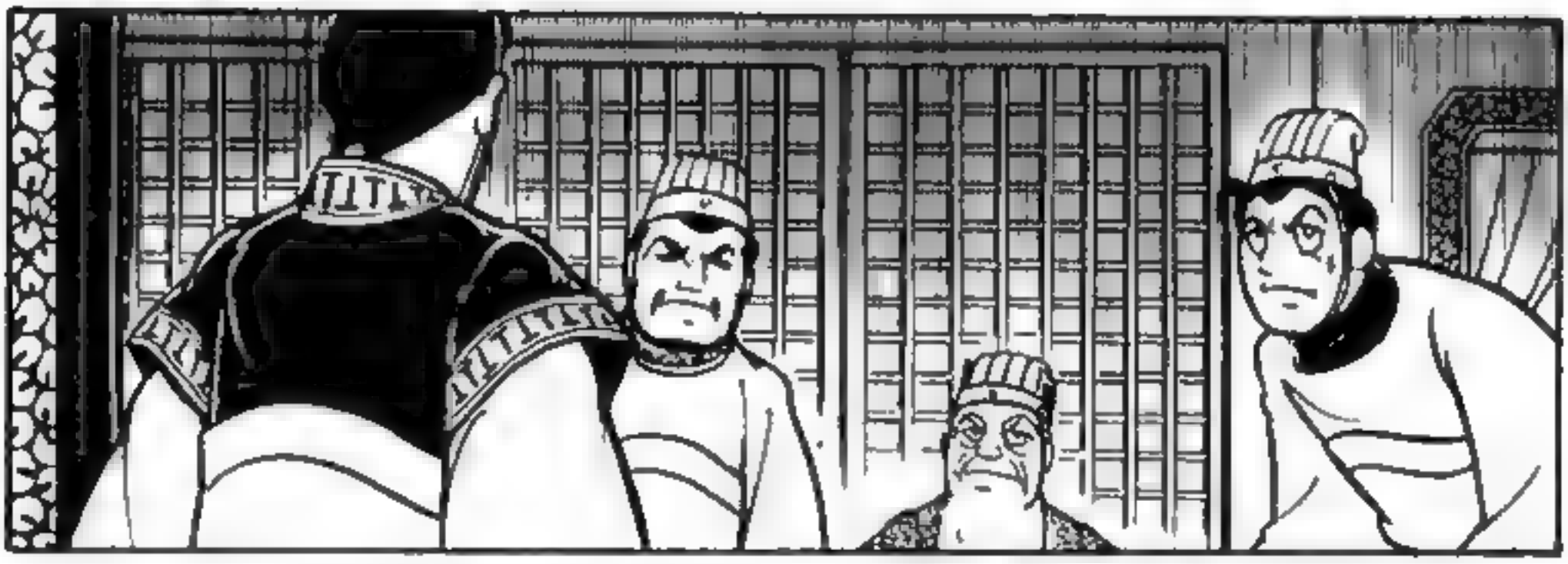

STOP RIGHT THERE, YOU TREASONOUS SCUM WHO DARE PLOT THE CHANCELLOR'S ASSASSINATION!

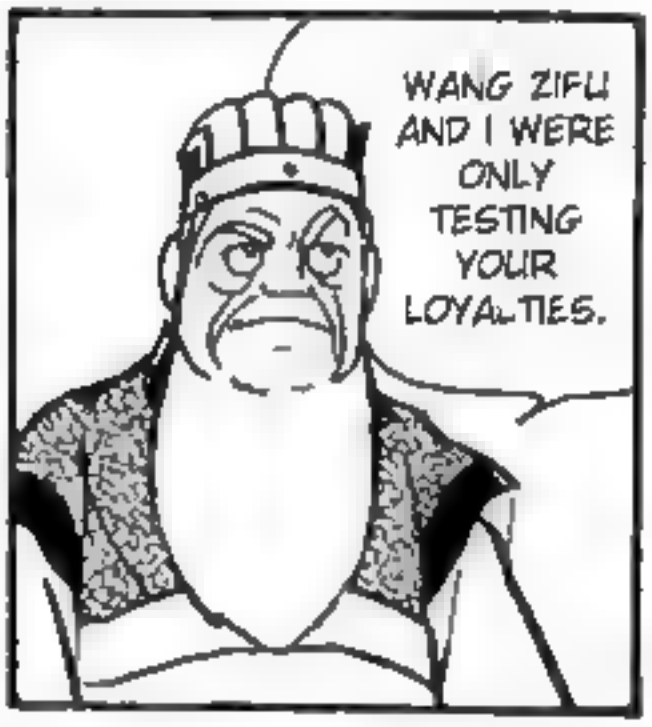

I SHALL TELL CHANCELLOR CAO CAO AT ONCE ABOUT YOUR PLOT!


YOU OVERHEARD US...!?

I WILL KILL YOU BEFORE YOU CAN DO THAT!
GO AHEAD AND TRY TO TELL YOUR PRECIOUS CHANCEL-LOR!

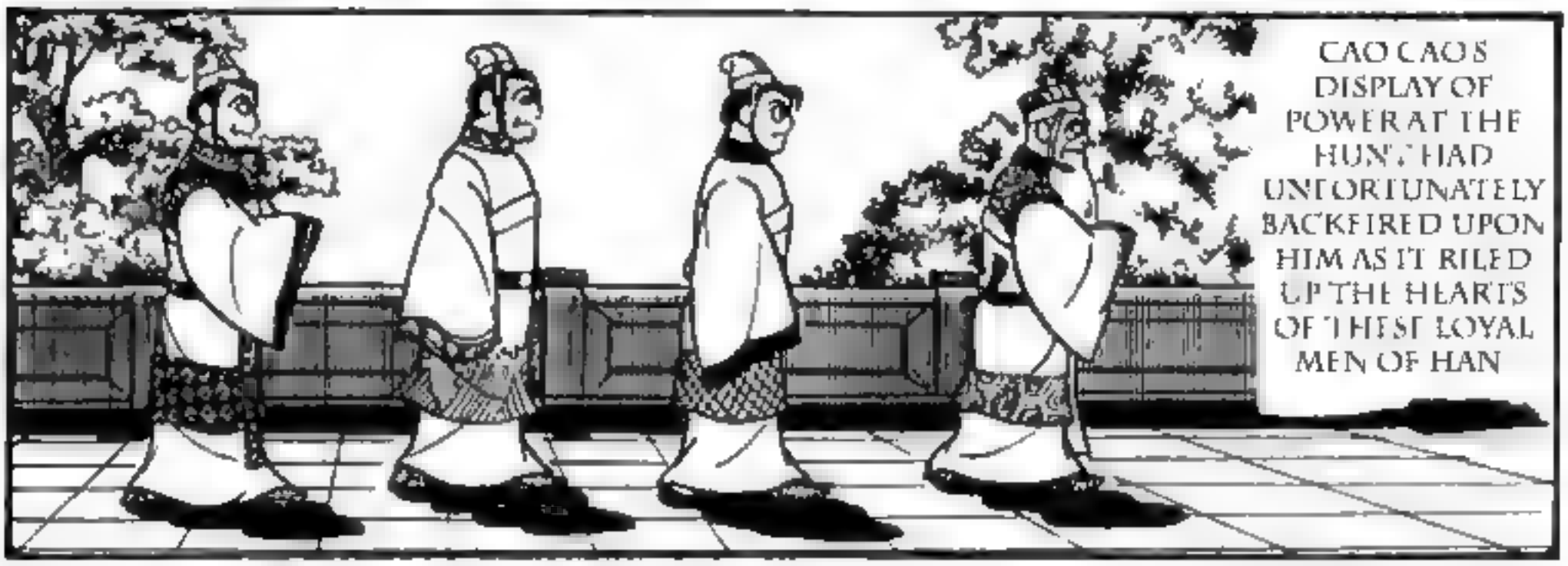
A LOYAL RETAINER FEARS NOT OF DYING FOR HIS COUNTRY.




WANG ZIFU AND I WERE ONLY TESTING YOUR LOYALTIES.

PLEASE, COME THIS WAY.

WHAT!?
PLEASE CALM DOWN! THIS HAS ALL BEEN JUST AN ACT!


CAO CAO'S DISPLAY OF POWER AT THE HUNT HAD UNFORTUNATELY BACKFIRED UPON HIM AS IT RILED UP THE HEARTS OF THESE LOYAL MEN OF HAN

YES, TO THINK THAT HIS HIGHNESS WAS DRIVEN TO THE POINT OF WRITING THIS DESPERATE CRY FOR HELP IN HIS OWN BLOOD...

THIS IS TRAGIC BEYOND WORDS...

YES, THANK YOU.

I WOULD LIKE TO SIGN THE PLEDGE AS WELL.

OUT OF ALL THE TIMES...

YOU CAN'T JUST REFUSE TO SEE HIM NOW THOUGH...

MASTER, THE GOVERNOR OF XILIANG, MA TENG, HAS COME TO SAY GOODBYE BEFORE HE RETURNS TO XILIANG.

OUR CURRENT MATTER IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT. I CANNOT JEOPARDIZE IT BY LETTING HIM IN MY HOME RIGHT NOW.

BUT IF HE WERE TO REALIZE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, THEN..

YES, MASTER.

TELL HIM THAT I AM ILL AND I CANNOT SEE HIM AT THE MOMENT.

WHAT!? HE'S TURNING ME AWAY AT THE DOOR WHEN I'VE COME ALL THE WAY TO HIS HOME TO PAY MY RESPECTS AND SAY GOODBYE!?

P-PLEASE WAIT HERE JUST A LITTLE WHILE, SIR.

IF HE IS ILL, THEN ALL THE MORE REASON FOR ME TO SEE HIM.

MASTER, MA TENG INSISTS THAT HE MUST SEE SIR NO MATTER WHAT.

LET HIM IN THE GUEST ROOM FOR NOW.

FINE...

YES, THANK YOU.

MY MASTER HAS AGREED TO SEE SIR. PLEASE, COME THIS WAY.

GOOD DAY SIR.

GOOD DAY, MA TENG.

BUT IT WAS REALLY CRUEL OF SIR TO TURN ME AWAY AT THE DOOR SO CURTLY.

SO I MUST SAY I WAS QUITE OFFENDED WHEN SIR TRIED TO TURN ME AWAY AT THE DOOR.

BECAUSE I AM ENTRUSTED WITH GOVERNING XILIANG, WHICH IS VERY FAR FROM THE CAPITAL, I DO NOT HAVE MANY CHANCES TO PAY MY RESPECTS TO BOTH HIS HIGHNESS AND YOU.

BUT SIR APPEARS QUITE HEALTHY TO ME.

PLEASE FORGIVE ME, THIS OLD BODY OF MINE HAD SUDDENLY FALLEN ILL...

I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE NOW.

I MISTAKENLY BELIEVED SIR TO BE A PILLAR STONE OF THIS NATION BUT NOW I SEE THAT YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A USELESS OLD ROCK GATHERING MOSS!

I MUST CONFESS THAT I HAVE OVERESTIMATED SIR.

WHAT IS IT, YOU MOSS COVERED ROCK?

WAIT, MA TENG!

HMM, WHAT'S THIS? DOES THE DECREPIT OLD MAN STILL HAVE A LITTLE FIERY PASSION WITHIN HIM? WELL THEN, ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU.

WHY DO YOU CALL ME AN OLD ROCK GATHER-ING MOSS!?

DO YOU NOT HEAR THE SUFFERING SCREAMS OF THIS DYING NATION!? CAN YOU NOT FEEL THE BLOOD OF LOYAL SERVANTS BOIL? OR ARE YOU JUST FEIGNING IGNORANCE!?

JUST OPEN YOUR EYES AND CLEAN OUT THOSE EARS! DID YOU NOT SEE WHAT CAO CAO DID DURING THE HUNT!?

YOU DAMN COW-ARD!

BUT CAO CAO IS MUCH TOO POWERFUL. NOTHING CAN BE DONE.

WAIT RIGHT THERE, MA TENG!

SERIOUS MATTERS?
I CANNOT DISCUSS OF SERIOUS MATTERS WITH COWARDS THAT CLING ON TO THEIR LIVES...!

?
PLEASE COME THIS WAY. THERE IS A GROUP OF MEN THAT I'M SURE YOU'D LIKE TO MEET.

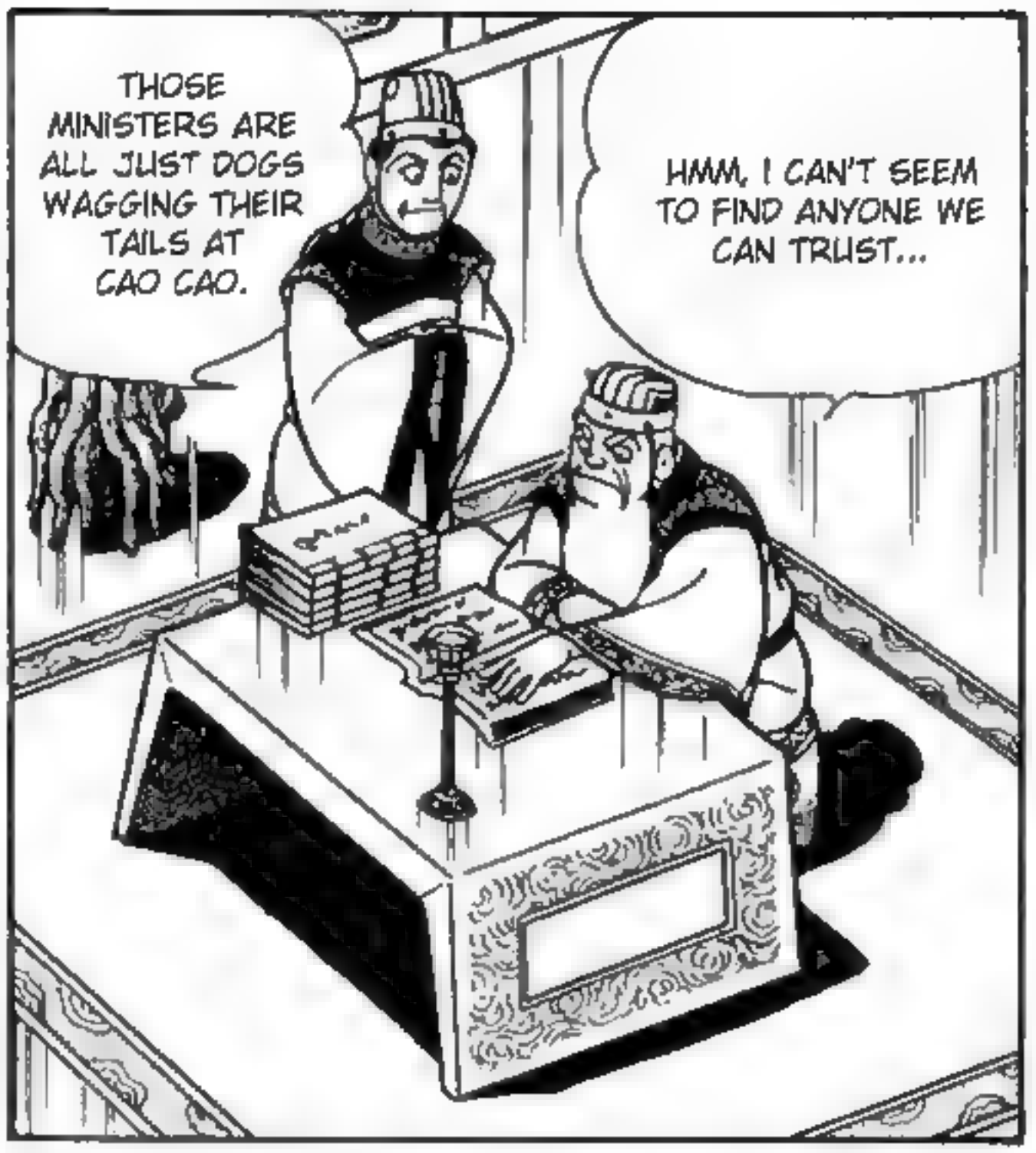
YES, WE MUST GATHER MORE ALLIES BEFORE ACTING.

WE NOW HAVE 6 PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIGNED THE BLOOD-SEAL PLEDGE BUT WE MUST GATHER AT LEAST 10 PEOPLE IF WE WANT TO SUCCESSFULLY PLOT CAO CAO'S ASSASSINATION.

YES, GOOD IDEA.

HERE IS THE REGISTRY LISTING ALL CURRENT OFFICE HOLDERS. LET US LOOK FOR MORE PEOPLE TO JOIN OUR CAUSE BY LOOKING THROUGH THIS.

AHH!


THOSE MINISTERS ARE ALL JUST DOGS WAGGING THEIR TAILS AT CAO CAO.
HMM, I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND ANYONE WE CAN TRUST...

LIU BEI, THE IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF YUZHOU.

NO, THAT IS JUST A COVER.

BUT ISN'T LIU BEI ON GOOD TERMS WITH CAO CAO?

I'M SURE LIU BEI IS WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO ACT AS WE....

I SPOTTED HIS YOUNGER BROTHER GUAN YU READY TO DRAW HIS SWORD AND CUT DOWN CAO CAO AT THE HUNT.

YES.

IF WE CAN MAKE HIM OUR ALLY, HE WILL SURELY BE OF GREAT HELP.

I SHALL GO SEE HIM AND ASK.

LET HIM IN FOR THE TIME BEING.

HMM...

YES, MASTER.

WHAT? DONG CHENG HAS COME TO VISIT ME THIS LATE IN THE NIGHT...?

THIS IS NO ORDINARY VISIT...

AH, NO, NO. THERE IS NO NEED FOR THAT. MORE IMPORTANTLY, I MUST APOLOGIZE FOR BARGING IN HERE SO LATE AT NIGHT

WELCOME, SIR. I COULD HAVE SPARED SIR THE TRIP AND GONE MYSELF TO YOUR HOME IF YOU JUST HAD CONTACTED ME IN ADVANCE...

I WISHED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.

SO WHAT BRINGS SIR TO SEE ME ON THIS NIGHT?

ON THAT DAY OF THE HUNT, YOUR BROTHER GUAN YU WAS READY TO UNSHEATHE HIS SWORD BUT YOU STOPPED HIM IN THE NICK OF TIME. I WOULD LIKE TO INQUIRE MORE ABOUT THAT..

WAS GUAN YU REALLY PLANNING TO KILL CHANCELLOR CAO CAO BACK THEN?

IS HE HERE TO INVESTIGATE ON CAO CAO'S ORDERS, I WONDER...

SO GUAN YU WAS SEEN...

REST ASSURED, LIU BEI, I HAVE NOT COME TONIGHT ON BEHALF OF CAO CAO.

AH, WELL... I BELIEVE MY BROTHER JUST LOST HIS COMPOSURE FOR A BRIEF MOMENT AS HE WAS OUTRAGED BY THE CHANCELLOR'S... UNORTHODOX ACTIONS.

WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING, SIR?

I HAVE COME TO SEE WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE.

AND SO I ASSUMED THAT GUAN YU'S FURY COULD MEAN YOUR FURY AS WELL.

I HAVE HEARD THAT YOU HAVE SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHER-HOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI FOR YOU THREE WERE LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS.

?

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

YES, IT IS A SECRET DECREE FROM HIS HIGHNESS.

T-THIS IS...!

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN HELPING HIS HIGHNESS RID OF HIS WORRIES?

I NEVER REALIZED JUST HOW MUCH HE WAS SUFFERING...

AND TO WRITE ALL THIS IN BLOOD...

THANK YOU. HAVING YOU AS AN ALLY IS LIKE HAVING THE HELP OF A 100 PEOPLE.

HOW COULD I, THE EMPEROR'S FAITHFUL RETAINER, REFUSE SUCH A REQUEST?

?

PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

IT IS QUITE REASSURING TO SEE THAT THERE ARE STILL THOSE WHO REMAIN LOYAL EVEN IN THESE HARD TIMES.

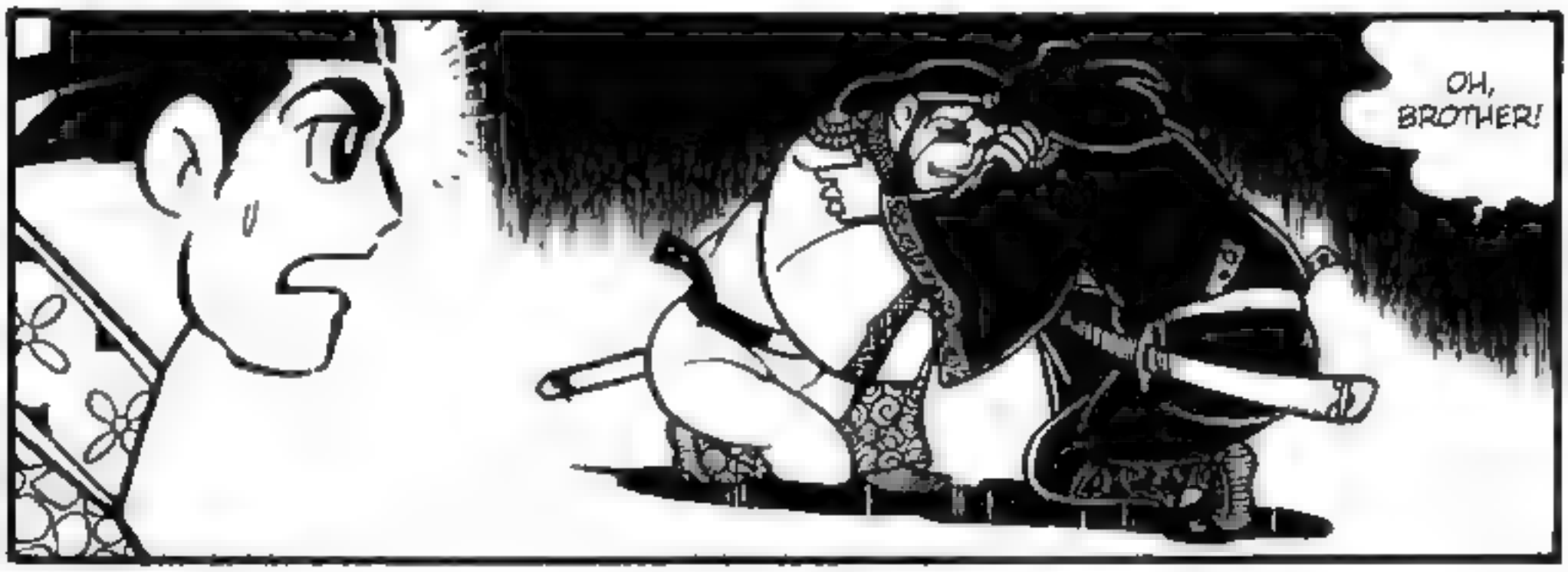
I SHALL GLADLY SIGN MY NAME AND BE THE 7TH MEMBER TO JOIN.

YES, AND THE 6 PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIGNED THEIR NAMES ARE OUR CURRENT ALLIES.

WHY, THIS IS A PLEDGE SIGNED IN BLOOD!

WHO'S THERE !?

-:WEEPING SOUNDS:-
BOO,


OH, BROTHER!

SO YOU OVERHEARD EVERY-THING?

YES, AND WE COULD NOT HELP BUT SHED THESE TEARS OF JOY

WE HEARD SOMEONE CAME TO VISIT BROTHER AT SUCH A LATE HOUR AND SO WE WERE WORRIED THAT SOME-THING SERIOUS MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED .

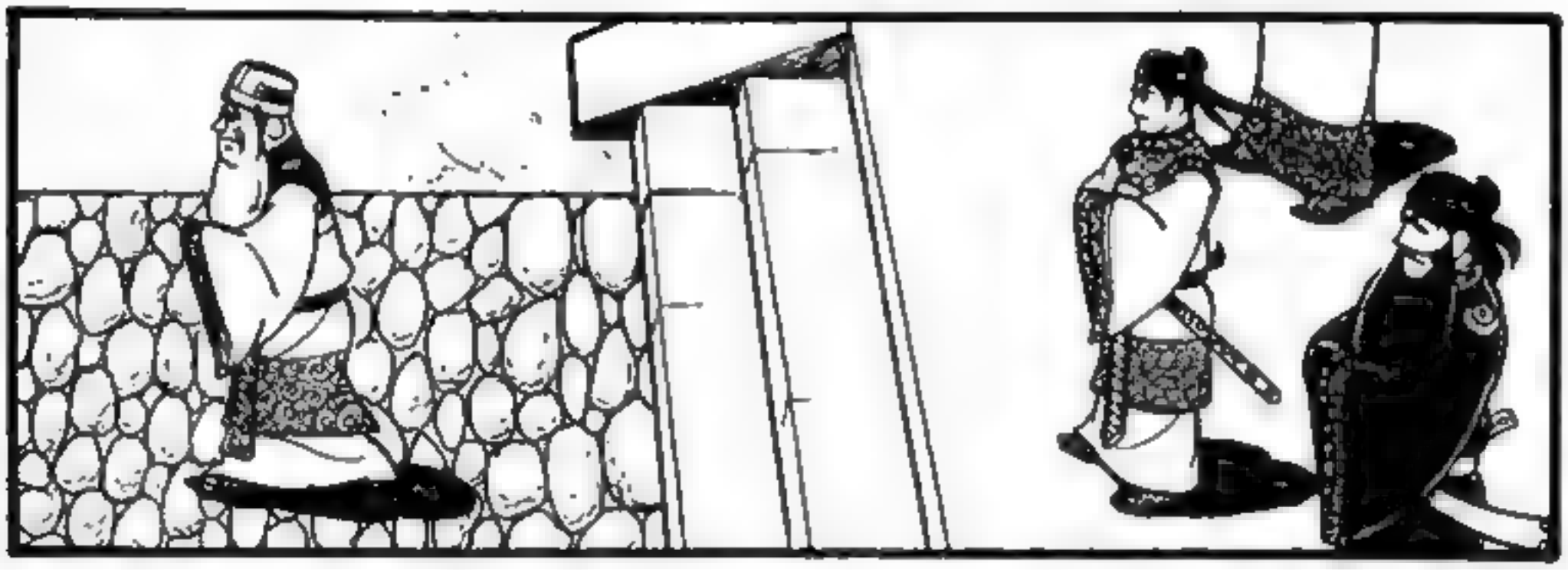
WHAT ARE YOU TWO DOING HERE THIS LATE AT NIGHT!?

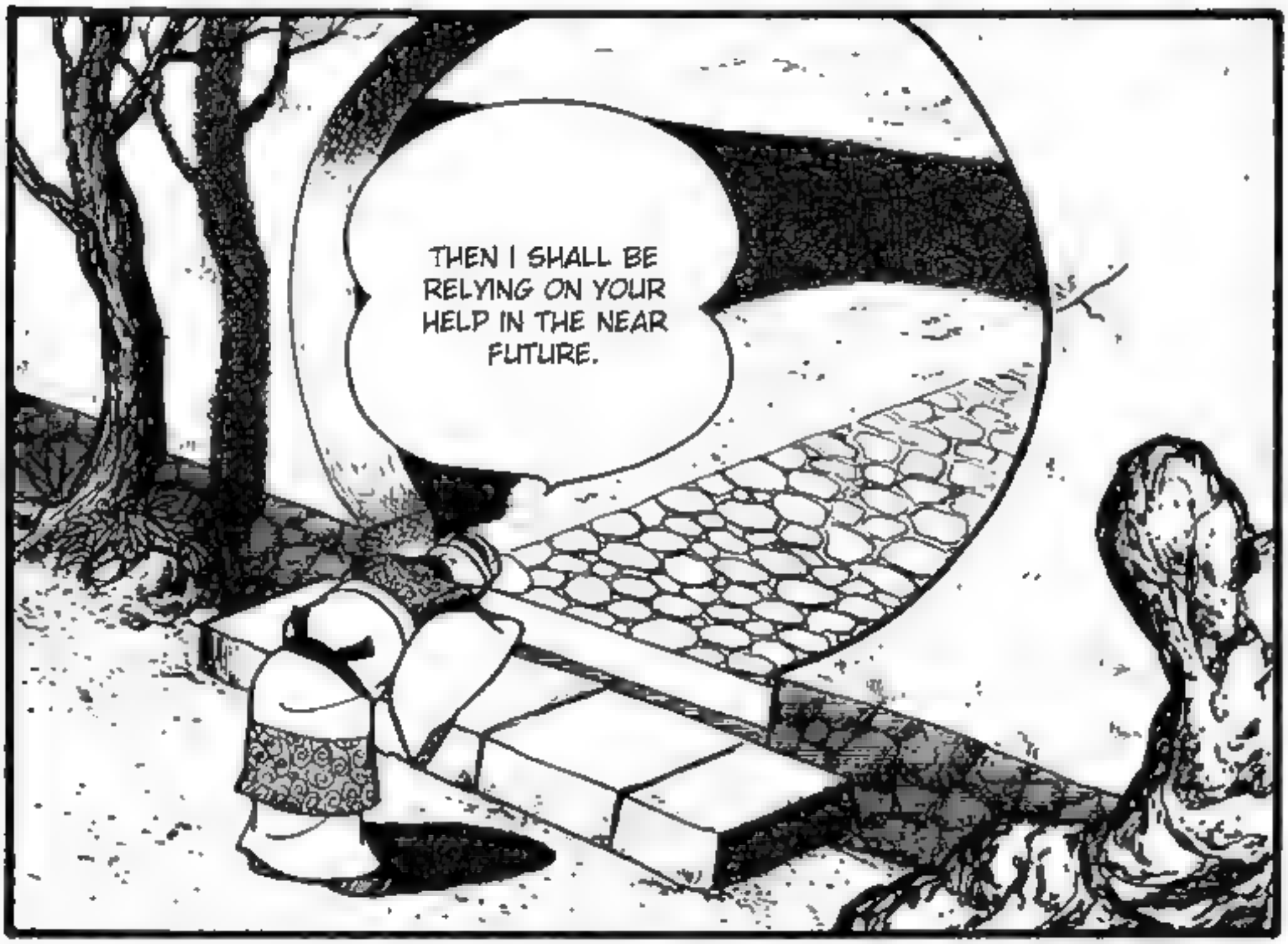
IF ONLY THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SIGNED THE PLEDGE CAN WORK WELL TOGETHER AS THESE 3 DO, OUR PLAN WILL SURELY SUCCEED...

MOST IMPRES-SIVE BROTH-ERS HE HAS...

YES. SIR MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO RUSH OUR PLAN AND BE EVER CAUTIOUS.

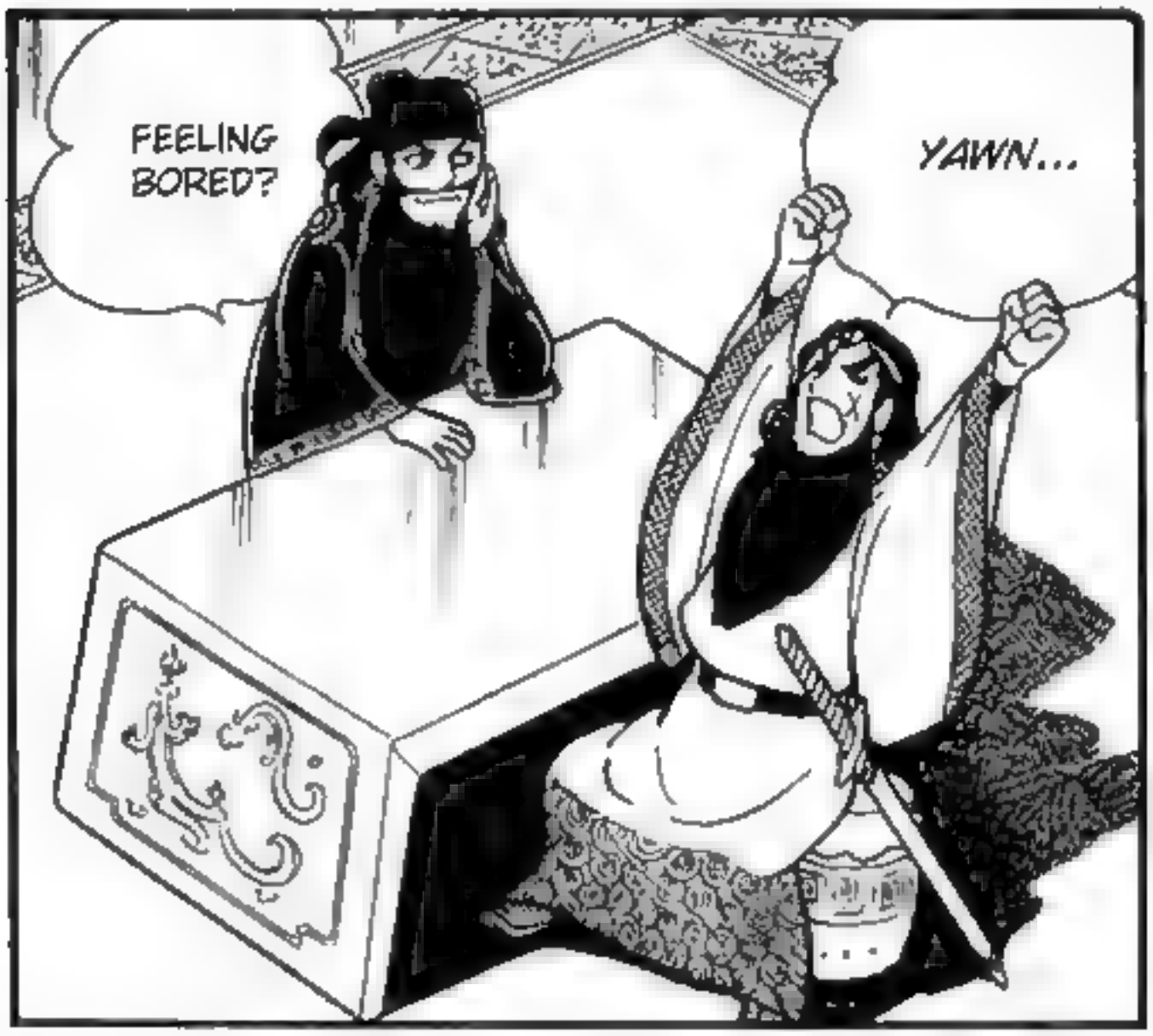
WELL THEN, IT IS ALREADY DAWN SO I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE.

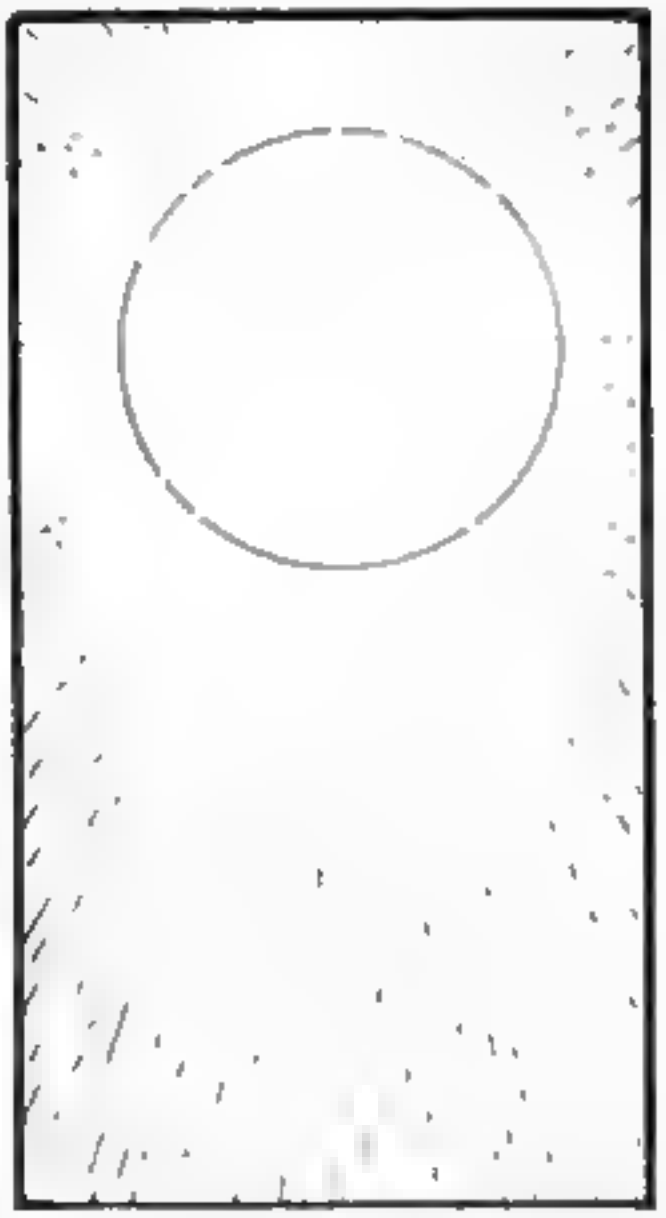



THEN I SHALL BE RELYING ON YOUR HELP IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

SO I WASN'T THE ONLY ONE INFURIATED BY CAO CAO ON THAT HUNT...

THE MAKINGS OF A HERO





BUT WE'VE SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD. WHAT ELSE CAN I CALL HIM?
WATCH THAT MOUTH OF YOURS. YOU CAN'T JUST REFER TO OUR LORD AS "BOSS" OR "BRO."

SO WHAT IS THE GREAT GENERAL WHO GUARDS THE EAST DOING THESE DAYS?

YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT.

TRUE...

OUR LORD IS THE IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF YIZHOU AND ALSO THE "GENERAL WHO GUARDS THE EAST." IF YOU GO AROUND REFERRING TO HIM AS "BOSS," IT'LL DEBASE HIS STATUS BY MAKING HIM SOUND LIKE A LEADER OF THUGS.

DOESN'T THE GENERAL WHO GUARDS THE EAST HAVE BETTER THINGS TO DO!?

HE'S DOING FARM WORK LIKE AN ORDINARY PEASANT.

ZHANG FEI, THAT'S ENOUGH.

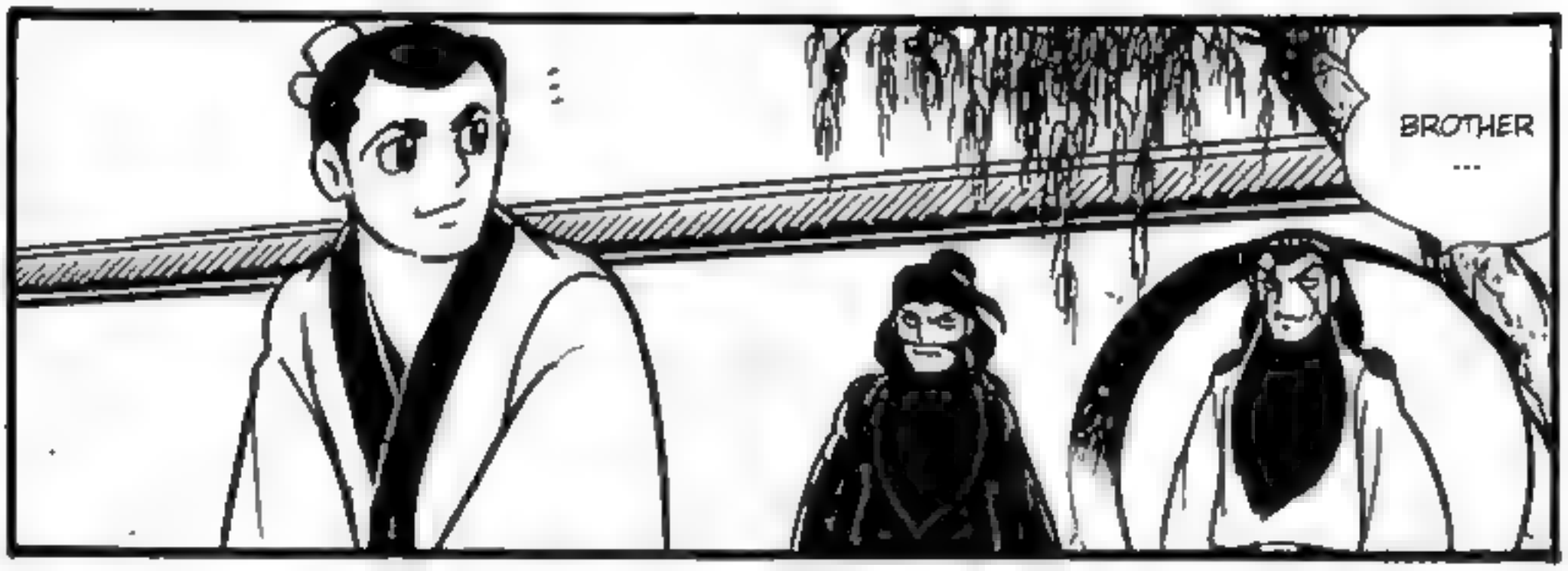
ALL HE DOES IS TEND THE FIELDS AND PLANT SOME VEGETABLES. HAS HE LOST HIS MIND OR SOMETHING?

AH, I KNOW! BROTHER, YOU SHOULD GO AND TALK TO HIM.

IF OUR LORD WANTS TO FARM SO MUCH, HE COULD JUST GO BACK HOME TO LILISANG VILLAGE. I JUST CAN'T UNDER-STAND WHY HE'S ACTING THE WAY HE IS NOW OF ALL TIMES.

WELL, YOU KNOW. JUST TELL HIM ABOUT WHAT THE PEOPLE OF WILL THINK IF HE CONTINUES TO SPEND ALL H'S DAY GARDENING.

ME? AND WHAT WOULD . TALK TO HIM ABOUT?


BROTHER
...

IT'S JUST THAT WE HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA WHY OUR LORD IS DOING SUCH LOWLY WORK.

UH, NO, ACTUALLY
AH, HAVE YOU COME TO HELP ME OUT?

IF BROTHER JUST WANTED TO STAY FIT, THERE'S ALWAYS ARCHERY AND HORSE RIDING.

IT'S ALRIGHT IF YOU TWO DON'T UNDER-STAND. JUST GO FIND SOME OTHER STUFF TO DO FOR NOW.

WE THREE HAVE SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD AND SO WE MUST ACT AND THINK AS IF WE SHARED ONE BODY AND MIND.

BUT BROTHER!

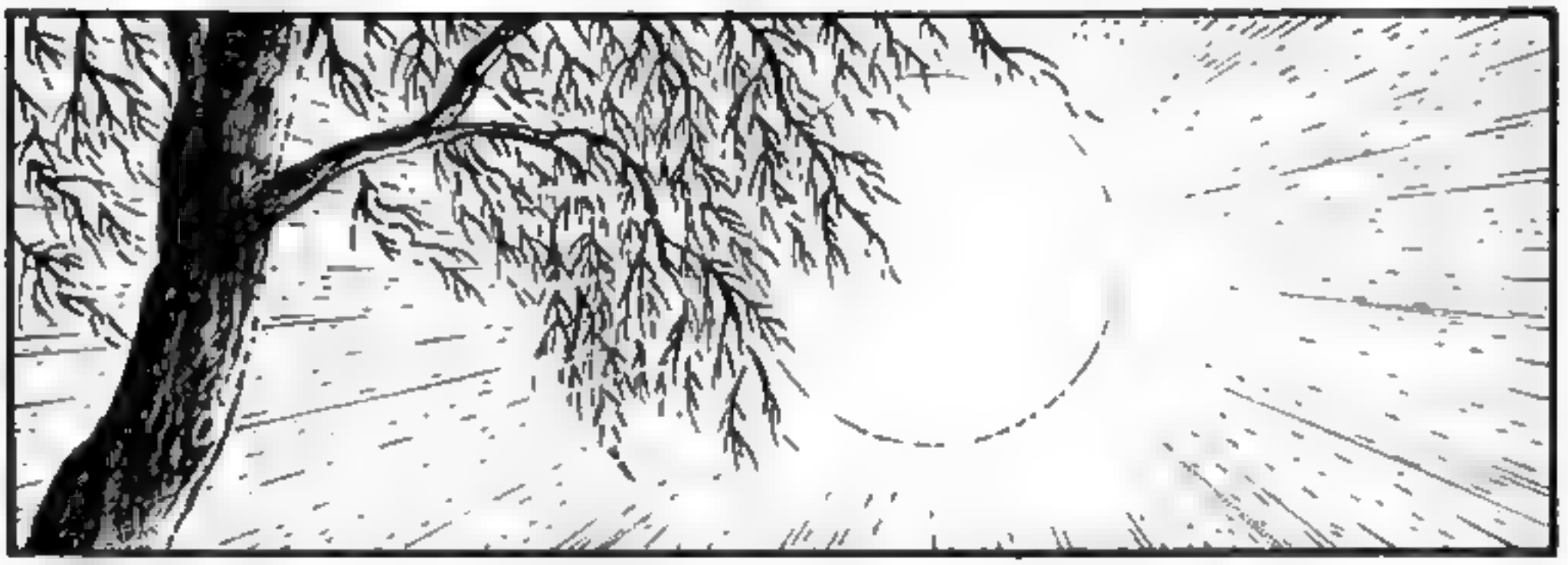
YES, YOU DO HAVE A POINT.

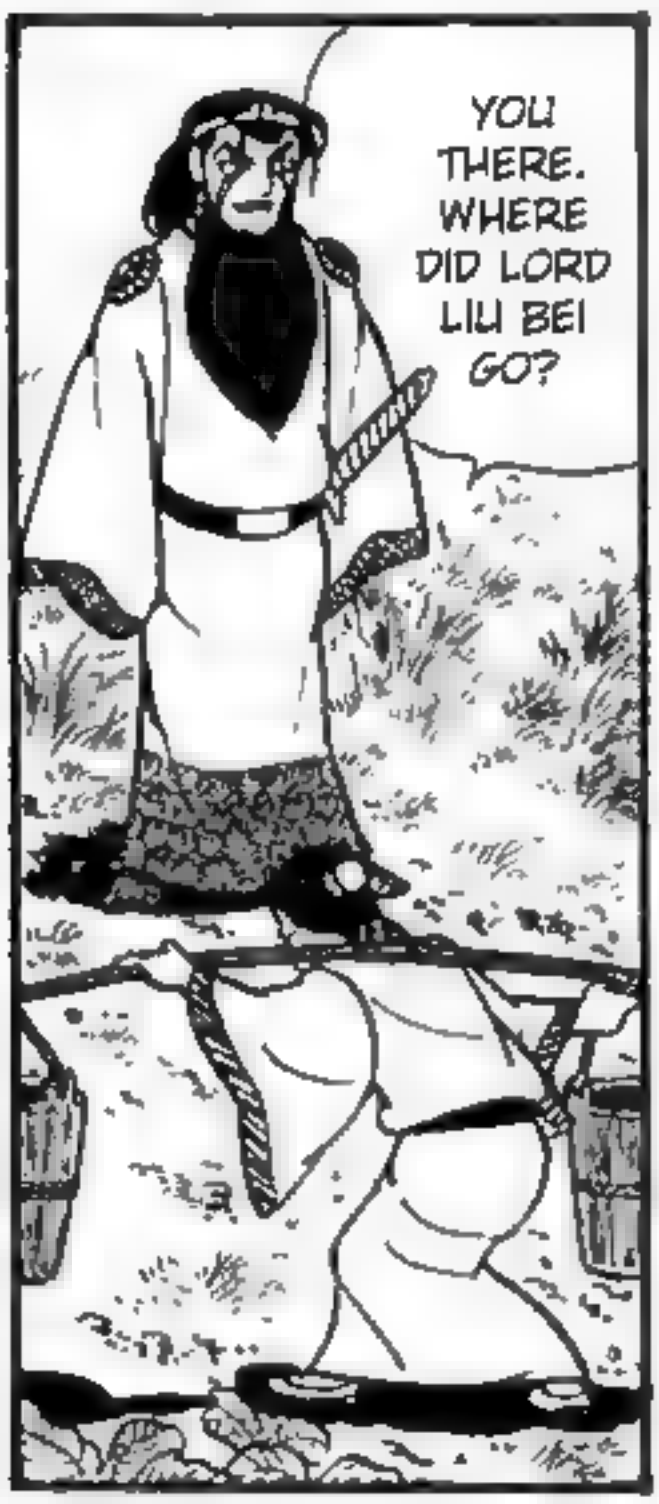
BUT I DO NOT FEEL LIKE TALKING ABOUT IT JUST YET.

HOW CAN WE BE ACTING OF ONE BODY AND MIND IF YOU WISH TO BE LEFT ALONE AND CONTINUE DOING THIS PEASANT LABOUR?

.....

I AM STILL THINKING DEEPLY ABOUT SOMETHING SO JUST TRUST IN ME AND REMAIN PATIENT FOR NOW.




YOU THERE. WHERE DID LORD LIU BEI GO?

HMM? BROTHER ISN'T HERE TODAY.

WHAT!?
CHANCELLOR CAO CAO HAS SUDDENLY SUMMONED LORD LIU BEI AND SO HE LEFT NOT TOO LONG AGO.

HE HAS SPIES EVERYWHERE. IT'S DEFINITELY NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT HE KNOWS ALREADY.

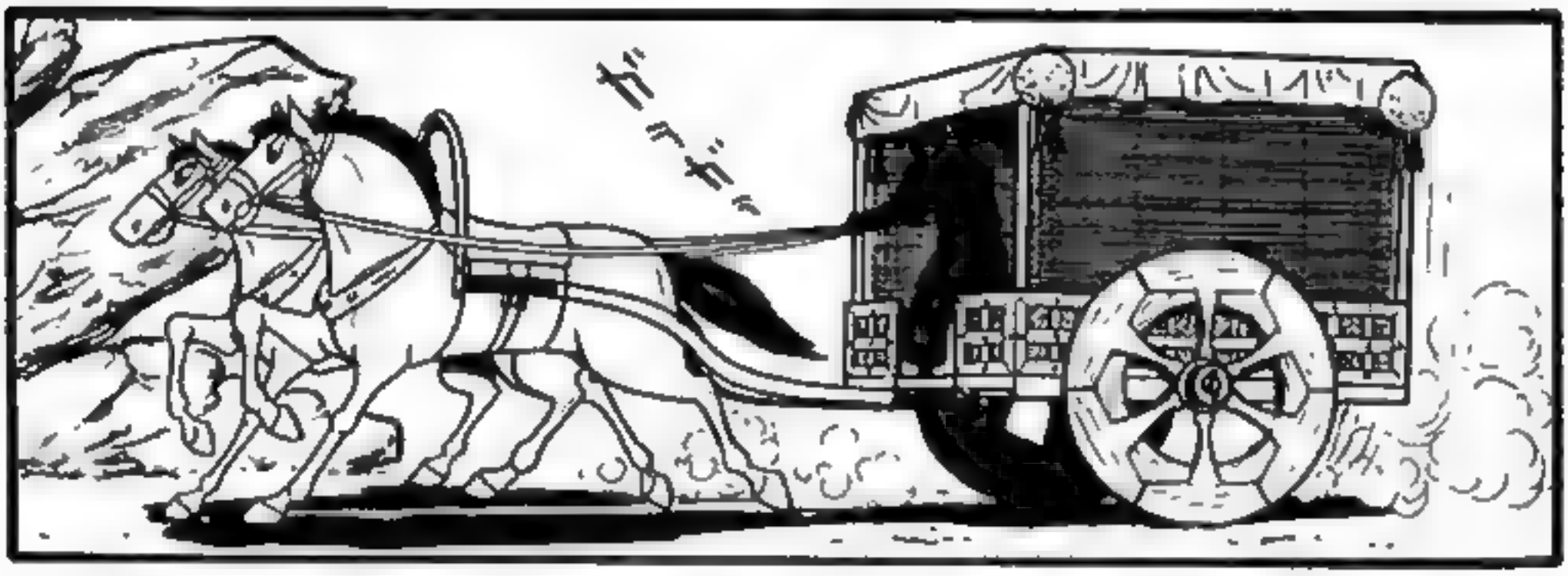
DO YOU THINK... THAT CAO CAO COULD HAVE FOUND OUT ABOUT DONG CHENG'S PLOT ALREADY?

TO CALL HIM UP SO SUDDENLY IT IS NO ORDINARY INVITATION.

YES.

WELL WHATEVER THE REASON IS, LET US HURRY OVER THERE!

?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JUST WHY DOES THE CHANCELLOR WISH TO SEE ME?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW, SIR

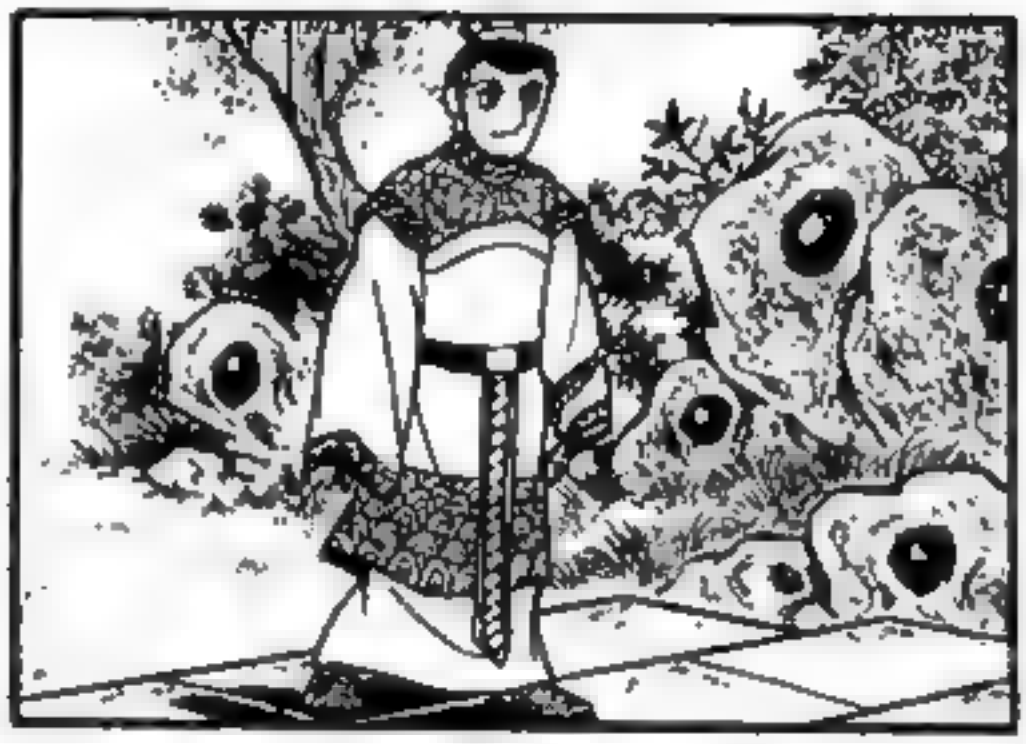
WE HAVE ARRIVED, SIR.

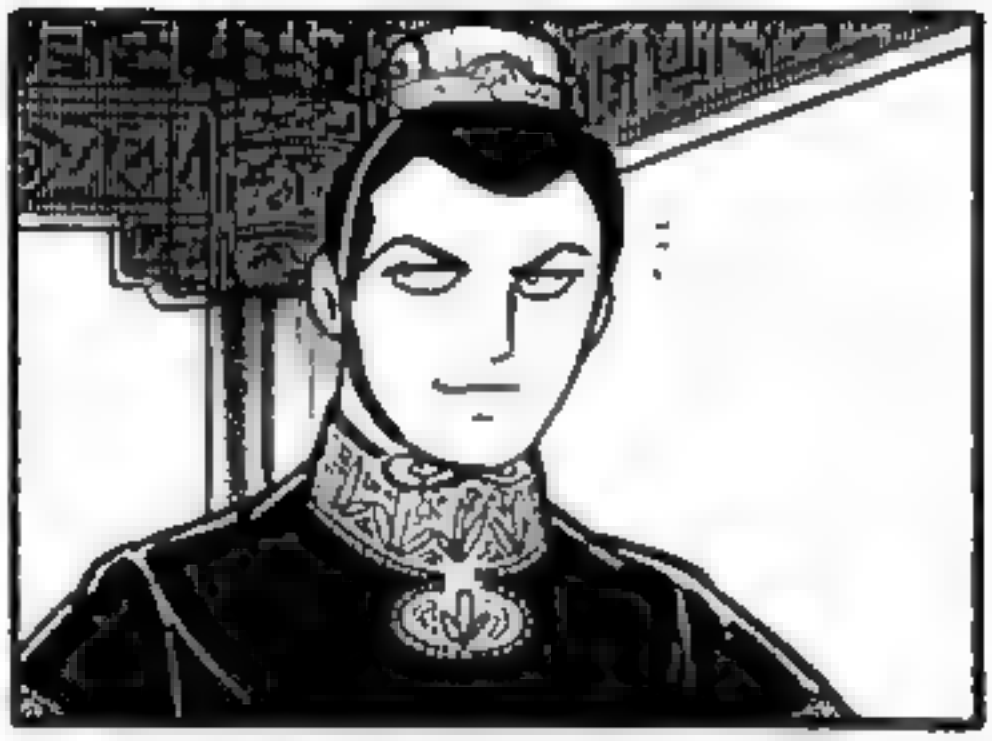
THIS WAY, PLEASE.

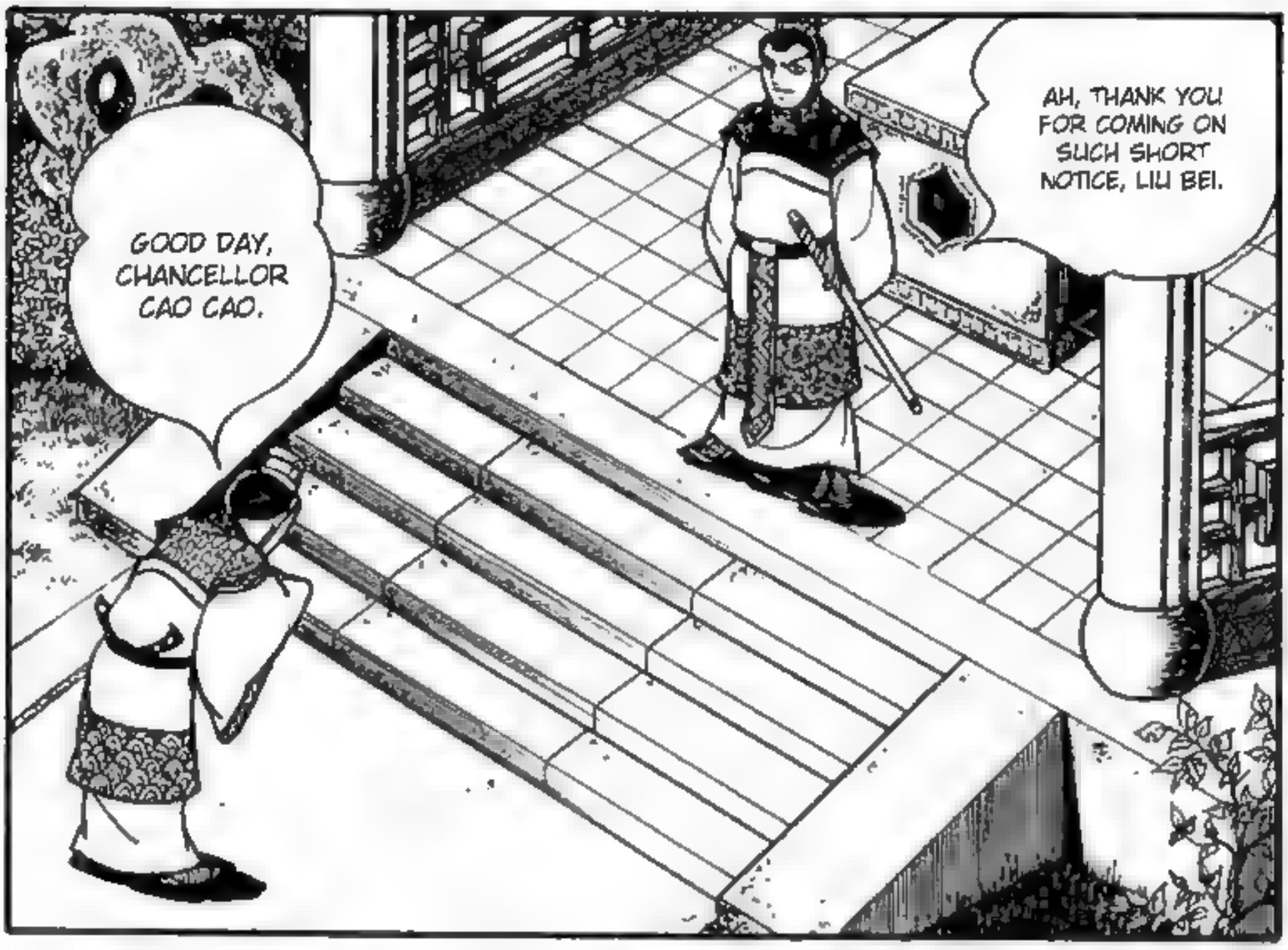
I WONDER WHY HE CALLED ME...

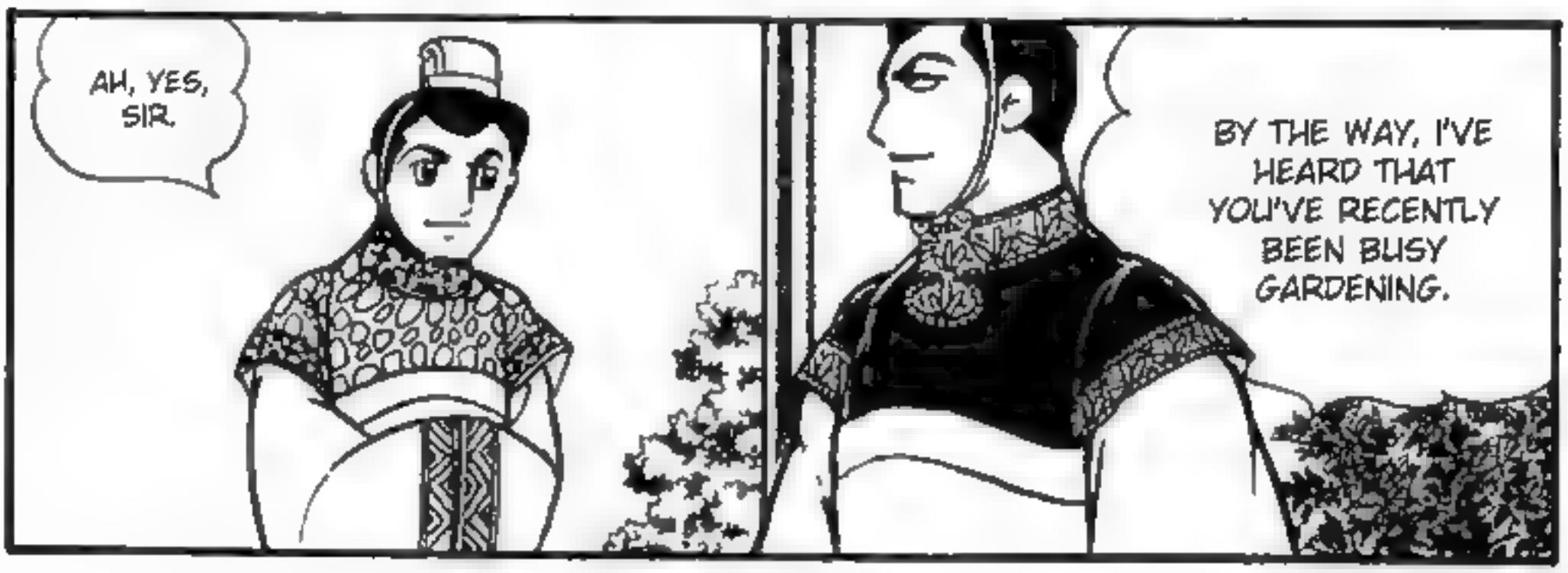
COULD HE HAVE ALREADY FOUND OUT ABOUT THE BLOOD-SEAL PLEDGE...?

THE CHANCELLOR IS AWAITING SIR OVER THERE.






GOOD DAY, CHANCELLOR CAO CAO.
AH, THANK YOU FOR COMING ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE, LIU BEI.

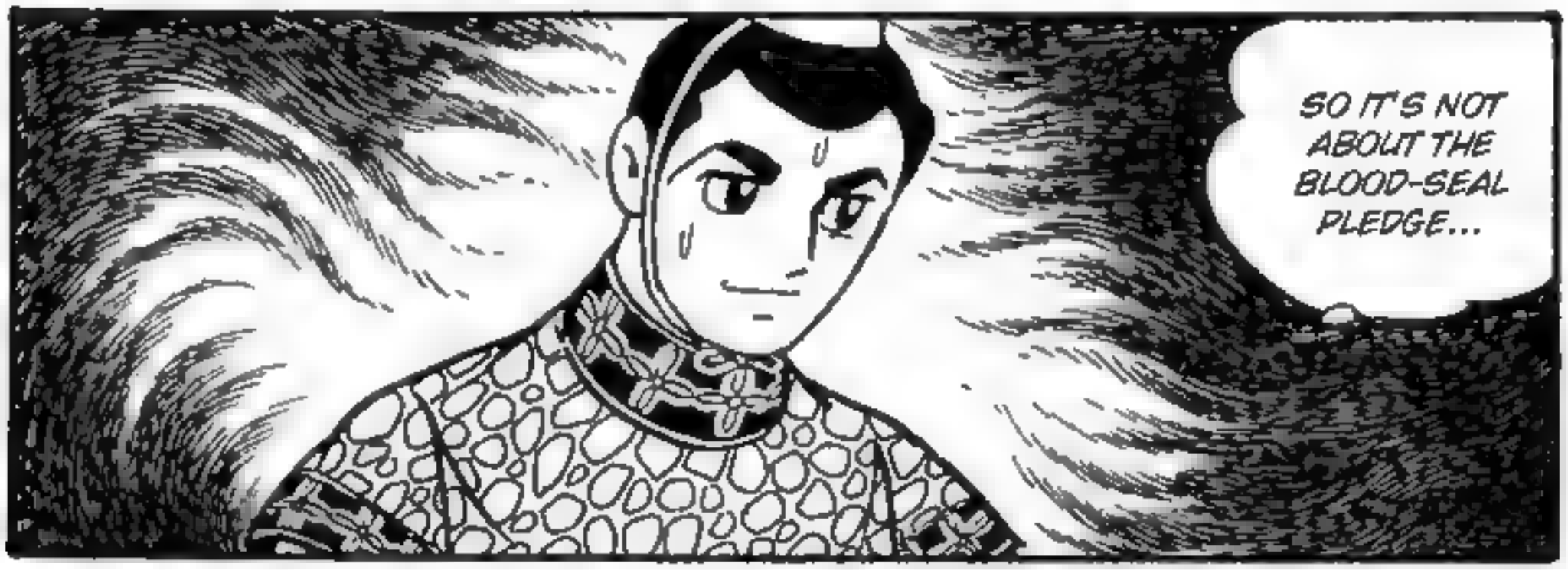

AH, YES, SIR.
BY THE WAY, I'VE HEARD THAT YOU'VE RECENTLY BEEN BUSY GARDENING.

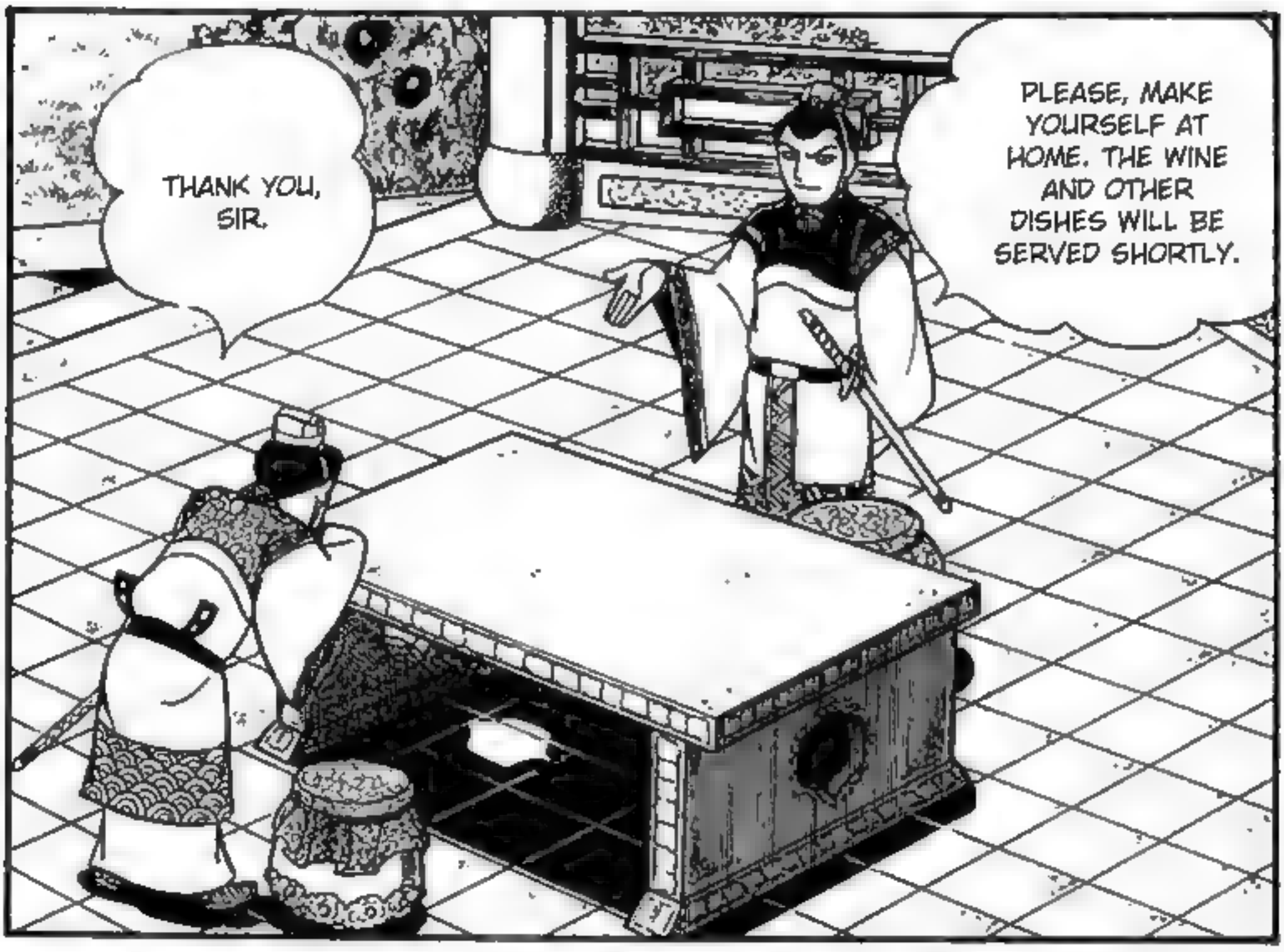
HAHA, SIR IS QUITE THE JOKER...

YES, IT CERTAINLY IS AN INEXPENSIVE HOBBY BUT I NEVER FIGURED YOU TO BE SUCH A FRUGAL MISER.

IT IS JUST A SIMPLE HOBBY OF MINE. NOT ONLY IS IT INEXPENSIVE TO DO, BUT I ALSO FIND THAT IT HELPS ME KEEP MY BODY FIT AND RELIEVE MY BOREDOM.

JOKES ASIDE, I DID NOT CALL YOU TO DISCUSS ANYTHING IMPORTANT. I MERELY THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE A DRINK TOGETHER EVERY NOW AND THEN.


SO IT'S NOT ABOUT THE BLOOD-SEAL PLEDGE...


THANK YOU, SIR.
PLEASE, MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME. THE WINE AND OTHER DISHES WILL BE SERVED SHORTLY.

BRING THE WINE!

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I THINK THAT SHARING A GLASS WITH MY GOOD FRIEND XUANDE UNDER THE RAIN WILL BE QUITE EXQUISITE.

HMM...

MY LORD, IT SEEMS THAT IT WILL RAIN SOON...

A DRAGON ..?

YOU'RE RIGHT!

LOOK! THAT CLOUD LOOKS JUST LIKE A DRAGON!

WELL, THAT DEPENDS ON ONE'S DEFINITION OF A DRAGON.

NO, SIR. BUT DO DRAGONS EVEN REALLY EXIST?

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A DRAGON BEFORE?

?

AND I CAN SEE THAT WITH MY VERY OWN EYES.

A DRAGON CAN BECOME LARGE OR SMALL DEPENDING ON THE TIMES.

BY THAT, I DO NOT MEAN LITERAL DRAGONS, BUT HUMANS. OR TO BE MORE PRECISE, HEROES.

BEFORE IT IS THEIR TIME TO SOAR INTO THE HEAVENS, DRAGONS ARE SAID TO HIDE BENEATH THE WATERS, LYING ABSOLUTELY STILL WITH ITS CLAWS HIDDEN AS TO NOT EVEN MAKE A SINGLE WATER RIPPLE.

BUT ONCE A DRAGON SEES THAT ITS TIME HAS COME, IT SUMMONS THE CLOUDS AND WINDS, AND SOARS INTO THE HEAVENS IN A GRANDIOSE FASHION.

AH, SO THAT'S WHAT SIR MEANS.

IN THIS RESPECT, THEY ARE QUITE SIMILAR TO HUMAN HEROES.

I WONDER IF YOU COULD BE A HIDDEN DRAGON AS WELL...?

IS THAT SO...?

O-OF COURSE NOT, SIR. I HAVE NO SUCH REMARKABLE TALENTS OR ABILITIES.

SINCE YOU HAVE TRAVELED WIDELY ACROSS THESE LANDS, I'M SURE YOU KNOW OF THE CURRENT HEROES OF OUR LANDS TODAY.

JUST GO AHEAD AND TELL ME ANYONE NOTABLE THAT MIGHT COME TO YOUR MIND.

HMM, I'M NOT REALLY SURE MYSELF.

WELL, YUAN SHU OF HUAINAN HAS EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO CALL HIMSELF EMPEROR. COULD HE BE CONSIDERED AS A HERO...?

THEN HOW ABOUT NAMING SOME MEN CONSIDERED AS HEROES BY THE PEOPLE TODAY?

WELL, IT'S HARD TO SAY...

HAHAHA, HE IS MERELY A SKELETON RATTLING IN HIS GRAVE. I SHALL SEE THAT HE MEETS HIS END SOONER OR LATER.

FOR ONE, HE LACKS DECISIVENESS BUT HE IS ALSO TOO COWARDLY TO TAKE BIGGER RISKS FOR A GREATER CAUSE, EVEN THOUGH HE PUTS HIMSELF AT GREAT RISK FOR THE SMALLEST OF GAINS. HOW CAN YOU CALL SUCH A MAN A HERO?

THEN WHAT OF HIS OLDER BROTHER, YUAN SHAO?

I CAN'T SAY THAT ANYONE COMES TO MIND...

ANYONE ELSE?

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN TO DRINK.

...I'M AFRAID THAT I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE EARLY TODAY, SIR.

YOU'VE ONLY NAMED TWO PEOPLE SO FAR. ARE YOU REALLY SAYING THAT THERE ARE NO OTHER HEROES?

AND WE STILL HAVEN'T FINISHED OUR TALK ABOUT HEROES.

AH, NOT AT ALL SIR. I WAS ONLY NAMING THE MOST WELL-KNOWN MEN TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.

ARE YOU SAYING THAT OUR WORLD RIGHT NOW IS SO DEVOID OF TALENTED MEN?

WHAT ABOUT LIU BIAO OF JINGZHOU?

SO THEN YOU HAVE OTHERS IN MIND?

IT'S HIS SUBORDI-NATES THAT DO THE ACTUAL GOVERNING FOR HIM. MOREOVER, HE IS MUCH TOO FOND OF ALCOHOL LIKE LU BU WAS. LIU BIAO, TOO, IS NO HERO.

HIS REALM STRETCHES OVER 9 STATES AND HE IS SAID TO GOVERN HIS LANDS WELL.

*WU: THE SOUTHERN REGIONS OF CHINA SOUTH OF THE YANGTZE RIVER

HMM...

SUN CE?

THEN WHAT ABOUT SUN CE OF WU*?

A SIMPLE WATCHDOG.

THEN HOW ABOUT LIU ZHANG OF YIZHOU?

THOUGH HE HAS ACHIEVED SOME VICTORIES OUT ON THE BATTLEFIELD, HE IS STILL A YOUNGSTER THAT RELIES TOO MUCH ON HIS LATE FATHER'S REPUTATION.

OF COURSE NOT

THEN IS SIR SAYING THAT ZHANG XIU, ZHANG LU, HAN SUI, AND OTHER LORDS CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS HEROES?

AHAHAHA! WHY DO YOU ONLY BRING UP THESE PETTY MEDIOCRITIES!?

A HERO IS ONE WITH GREAT AMBITION WHO HAS THE TALENT AND WIT TO CARRY IT OUT NO MATTER WHAT. HE DOES NOT STEP BACK ONCE HE ACTS NOR FALL BEHIND THE FLOW OF TIME. HE UNDERSTANDS THE WAY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND CAN MOVE THE HEARTS OF MILLIONS FOR HIS CAUSE.

YES, BUT ONLY TWO.

IS THERE ANYONE IN THIS WORLD THAT MERITS SUCH DESCRIPTIONS?

AND THAT IS YOU AND I!

TO THINK THAT CAO CAO FEARED ME TO THIS EXTENT... I CAN'T HAVE HIM FEAR ME NOW...!

AGHH!
EEK!

I... I'M ACTUALLY TERRIFIED OF THUNDER...

?

WHAT'S THE MATTER!?

OH?

YES, I KNOW IT'S AN IRRATIONAL FEAR BUT EVER SINCE I WAS A CHILD, I COULDN'T HELP BUT BE AFRAID...

THUNDERS ARE SIMPLY THE SOUNDS OF THE HEAVENS. JUST WHAT IS THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?

TEE HEE!

THE THUNDER, HUH...?

PERHAPS I'VE OVERESTIMATED HIM...

HAHA...

THERE'S NO REASON TO FEAR A COWARD WHO IS AFRAID OF A LITTLE THUNDER.

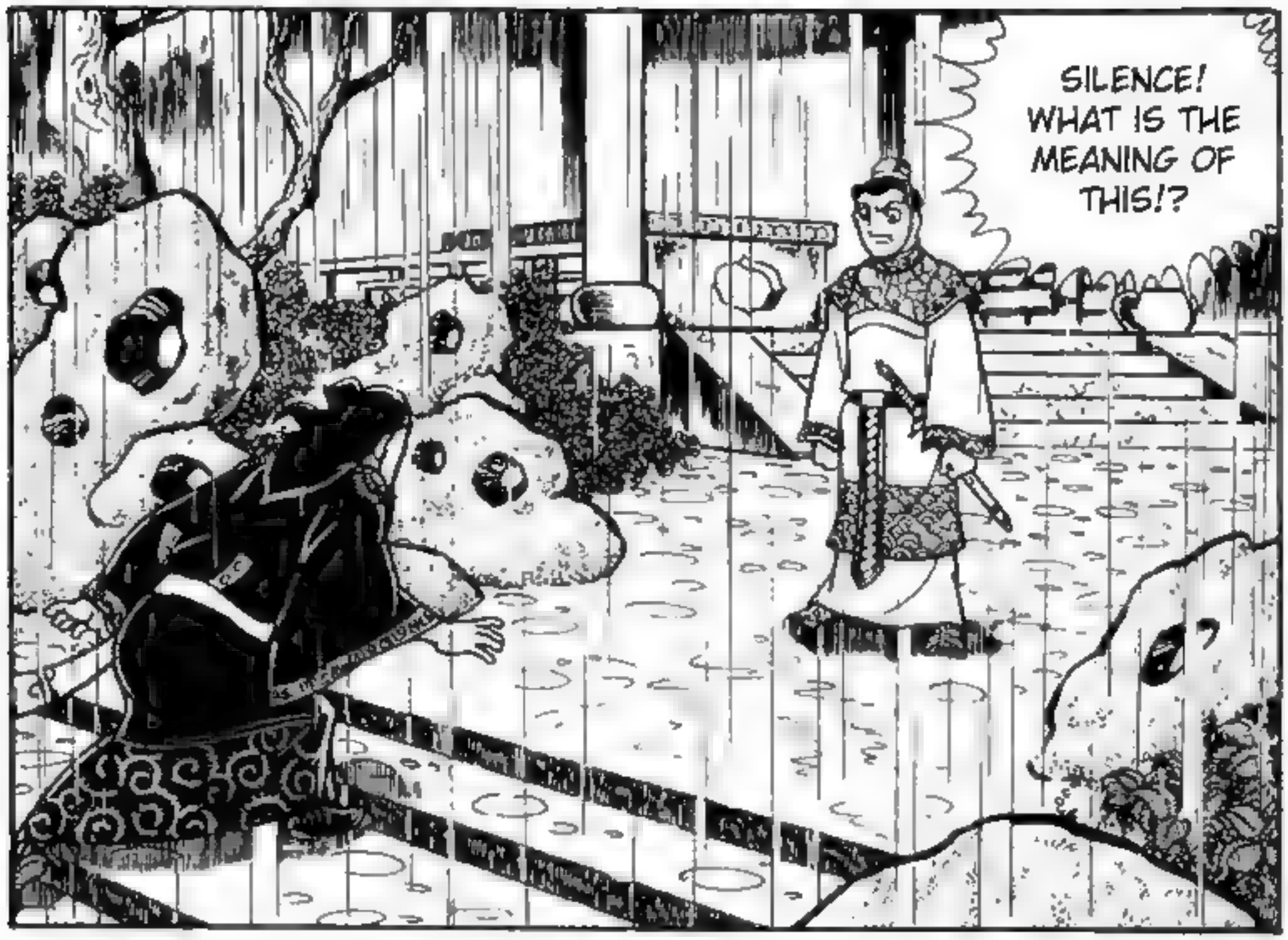
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

SHUT UP AND MOVE OUT OF THE WAY!
HALT! WHO GOES THERE!?

DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO MOVE OUT OF THE WAY ALREADY!?

WHAT IMPU-DENCE! DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW!?

MY LORD!


SILENCE! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS!?

IS EVERY-THING WELL, MY LORD?

OH, MY LORD IS SAFE AND SOUND!

AH, SO IT'S GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI. WHY HAVE YOU TWO SUD-DENLY COME HERE WHEN I DID NOT INVITE YOU?

I WASN'T PLANNING FOR SUCH A BANQUET. I MERELY WISHED TO HAVE A QUIET DRINK WITH LIU BEI.

AFTER HEARING THAT OUR LORD WAS INVITED TO A BANQUET BY THE CHANCELLOR, WE CAME THINKING THAT WE COULD ENTERTAIN SIR WITH A LITTLE SWORD DANCE...

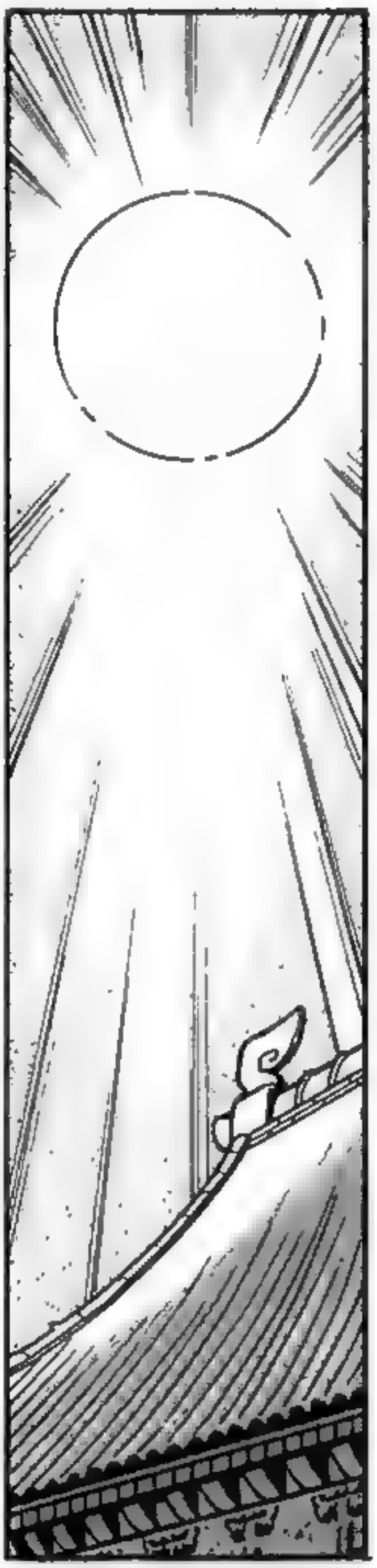
ALRIGHT. I AM IN A GOOD MOOD TODAY SO I WILL LET IT SLIDE.

PLEASE PARDON THE FOOLISH ACTIONS OF MY YOUNGER BROTHERS, SIR.

THANK YOU, SIR. THEN I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE NOW.

LOOSE TIGER

WHAT!? BROTHER IS OFF TO SEE CAO CAO AGAIN!?
YOU JUST NEVER KNOW WHAT THAT CAO CAO IS PLANNING. IT IS TOO DANGEROUS, BROTHER.
THAT IS PRECISELY WHY I'M GOING TO MEET HIM.



IF I START AVOIDING CAO CAO NOW, THEN HE WILL BECOME SUSPICIOUS OF ME AGAIN AND OUR PLAN MAY FAIL.

AFTER AGREEING TO DONG CHENG'S PLOT, I SPENT ALL MY TIME DOING MENIAL LABOUR BECAUSE I WANTED TO CONVINCE CAO CAO THAT I HAD NO REAL AMBITION. BUT DESPITE THAT, HE STILL CONSIDERED ME AS HIS GREATEST RIVAL AND SO I HAD TO FEIGN A PHOBIA OF THUNDER THE OTHER DAY TO CONVINCE HIM THAT I WAS REALLY NOT A THREAT TO HIM.

THAT IS WHY IT IS BETTER TO STAY ON CAO CAO'S GOOD SIDE FOR THE TIME BEING BY MEETING WITH HIM OFTEN AND MAINTAINING OUR FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP.

PLEASE FORGIVE US FOR OUR IGNORANCE. WE DID NOT REALIZE OUR LORD HAD BEEN THINKING SO FAR AHEAD.

HMM? LIU BEI HAS COME TO THANK ME FOR MY INVITATION THE OTHER DAY?

YES, SIR.

PREPARE THE FOOD AND DRINKS.

I WISHED TO THANK SIR FOR THE INVITATION THE OTHER DAY. I HAD A LOVELY TIME

IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN SO SOON.

I AM HONOURED, SIR.

WELL SINCE YOU ENJOYED IT SO MUCH, WHY DON'T WE ENJOY ANOTHER LUNCH TOGETHER? THERE WON'T BE ANY THUNDER THIS TIME.

THANK YOU AGAIN, SIR.

PLEASE, HAVE A SEAT AND ENJOY THE FOOD AND WINE.

WHAT IS IT?

MY LORD!

IS THAT SO? GOOD, LET HIM IN.

MAN CHONG HAS COME BACK TO REPORT THE SITUATION IN HEBEI, MY LORD.

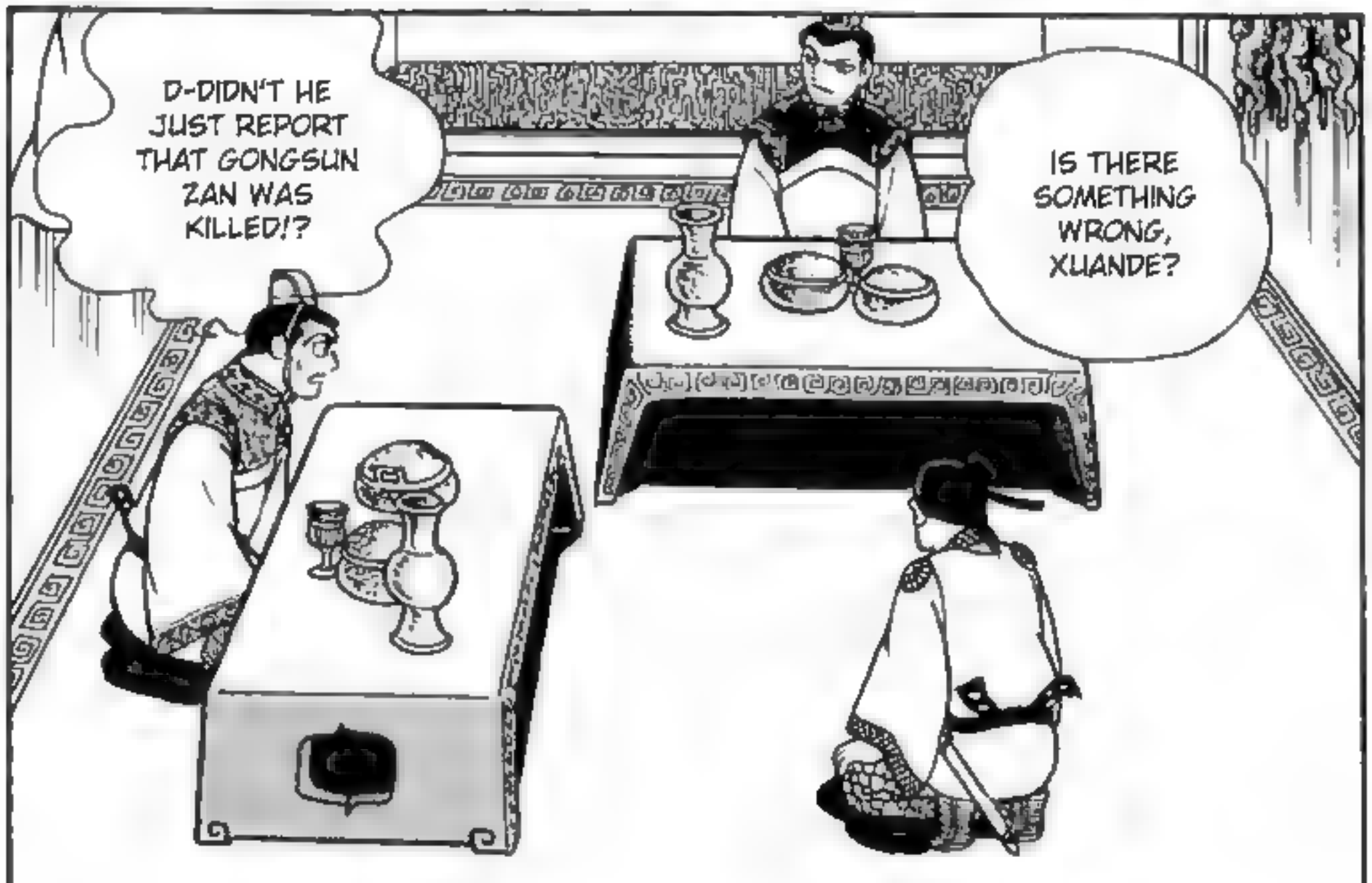
YES, THANK YOU FOR TRAVELLING ALL THE WAY TO HEBEI AND BACK.

MAN CHONG, AT YOUR SERVICE, MY LORD.

IN THE BATTLE FOR HEBEI AND IT'S SURROUNDING REGIONS, GONGSUN ZAN OF BEIPING AND HIS FORCES HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY ANNHILATED BY YUAN SHAO'S FORCES.

SO ANY NEW HAPPENINGS IN HEBEI?

WHAT!?


D-DIDN'T HE JUST REPORT THAT GONGSUN ZAN WAS KILLED!?
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG, XUANDE?

I... AM INDEBTED TO GONGSUN ZAN'S KINDNESS...

YES, IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

BACK WHEN I HAD NO OTHER SUBORDINATES AND ONLY MY BROTHERS WERE WITH ME, IT WAS GONGSUN ZAN WHO LET ME JOIN THE ALLIANCE AGAINST DONG ZHUO.

I HUMBLY REQUEST TO SPEAK WITH GONGSUN ZAN OF BEIPING.

WAIT, WE ARE NOT ANYONE SUSPICIOUS.

WE BEG OF YOU, SIR.

THE THREE OF US WISH TO JOIN SIR'S FORCES AND FIGHT AGAINST DONG ZHUO AS WELL.

I WOULD BE HONOURED TO HAVE A MAN AS TALENTED AS YOU BE A PART OF MY ARMY.

IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, AREN'T YOU LIU BEI XUANDE?

THANK YOU, SIR.

AND FROM THEN ON, WE BECAME CLOSE ACQUAINTANCES AND HE EVEN RECOMMENDED ME AS THE GOVERNOR OF PINGYUAN. I WOULD NOT BE WHERE I AM TODAY, IF NOT FOR HIS ASSISTANCE.

TO THINK THAT EVEN A MAN AS POWERFUL AND UPSTANDING AS GONGSUN ZAN HAS DISAPPEARED OVER-NIGHT... WHAT A WORLD WE LIVE IN...

PERHAPS GONGSUN ZAN DID NOT HAVE WHAT IT TOOK TO SURVIVE IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.
BUT SUCH IS THE WAY OF A WARRIOR...

I SEE, I SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR SADNESS.

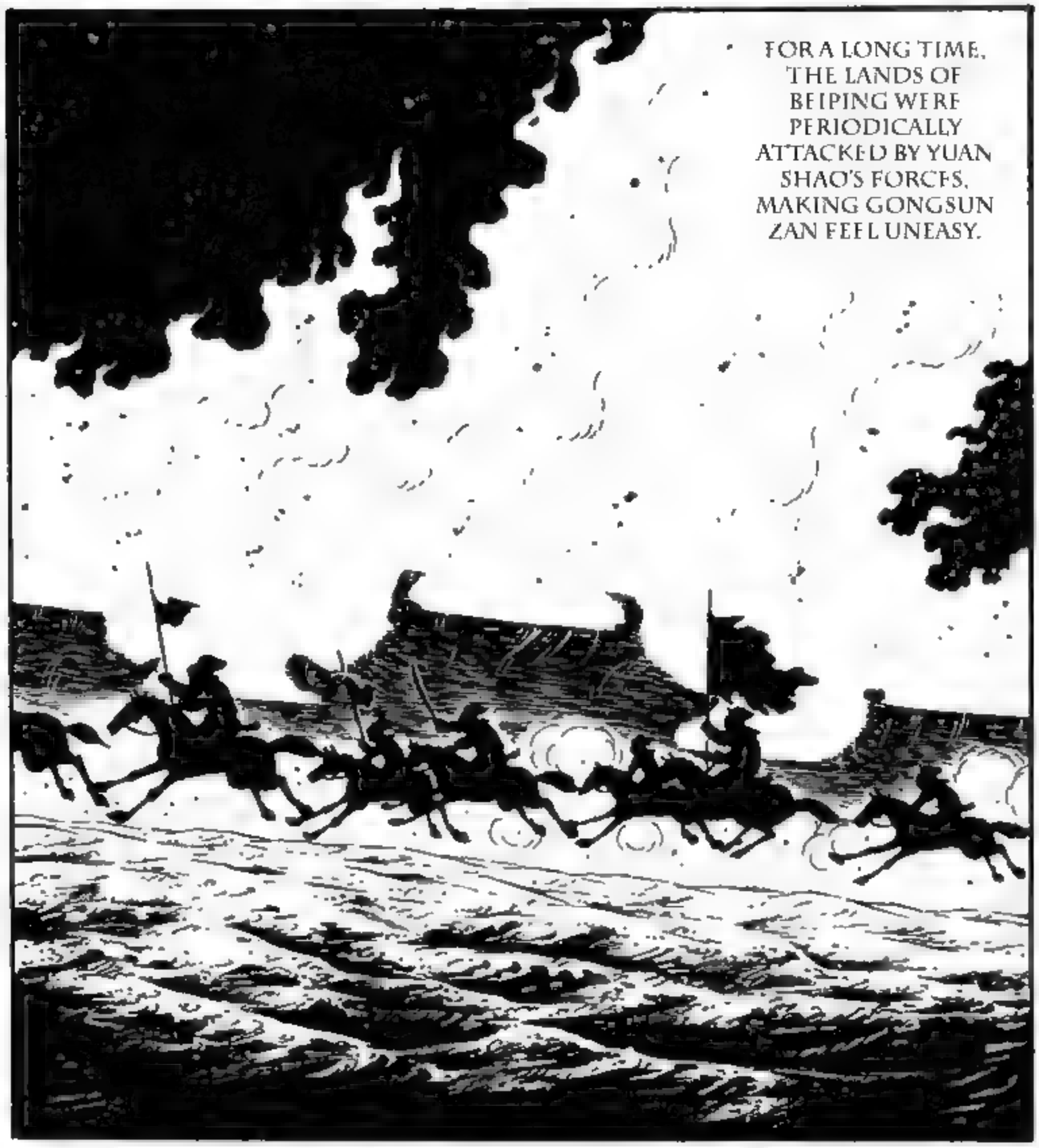
ALTHOUGH CAO CAO MAY CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN RIGHT, LIU BEI BECAME NERVOUS AT REALIZING THE FICKLE TRANSIENCE OF HUMAN FATES AND LIVES. HAVING SECRETLY JOINED DONG CHENG IN HIS PLOT TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, HE COULD NOT HELP BUT WONDER, "WHO WOULD BE THE NEXT ONE TO DISAPPEAR, CAO CAO OR HIMSELF?"

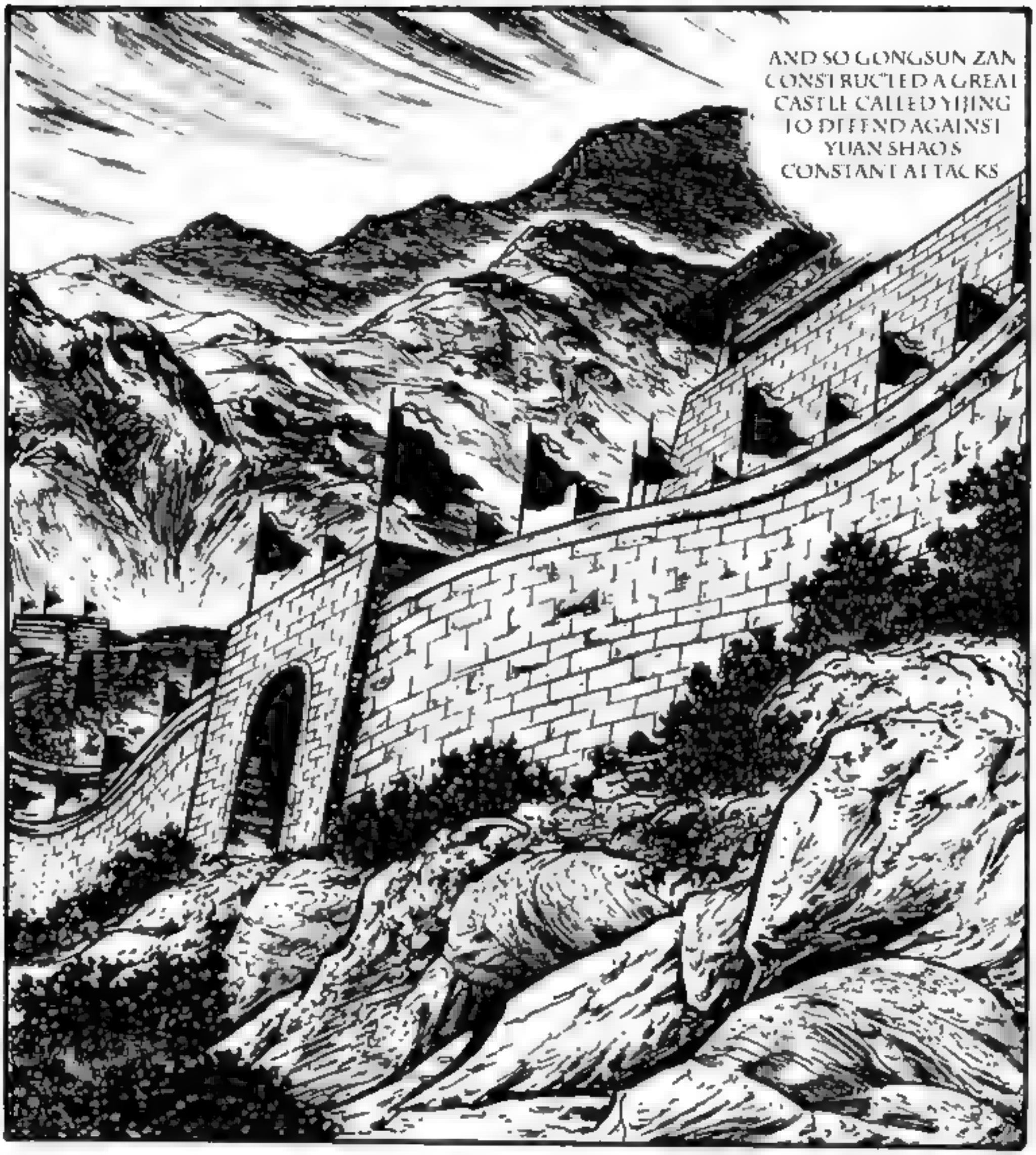
COULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME THE SPECIFICS OF HOW GONGSUN ZAN CAME TO MEET HIS END?

YES, MY LORD.

YES, GO AHEAD AND TELL HIM, MAN CHONG.

ACCORDING TO
MAN CHONG...

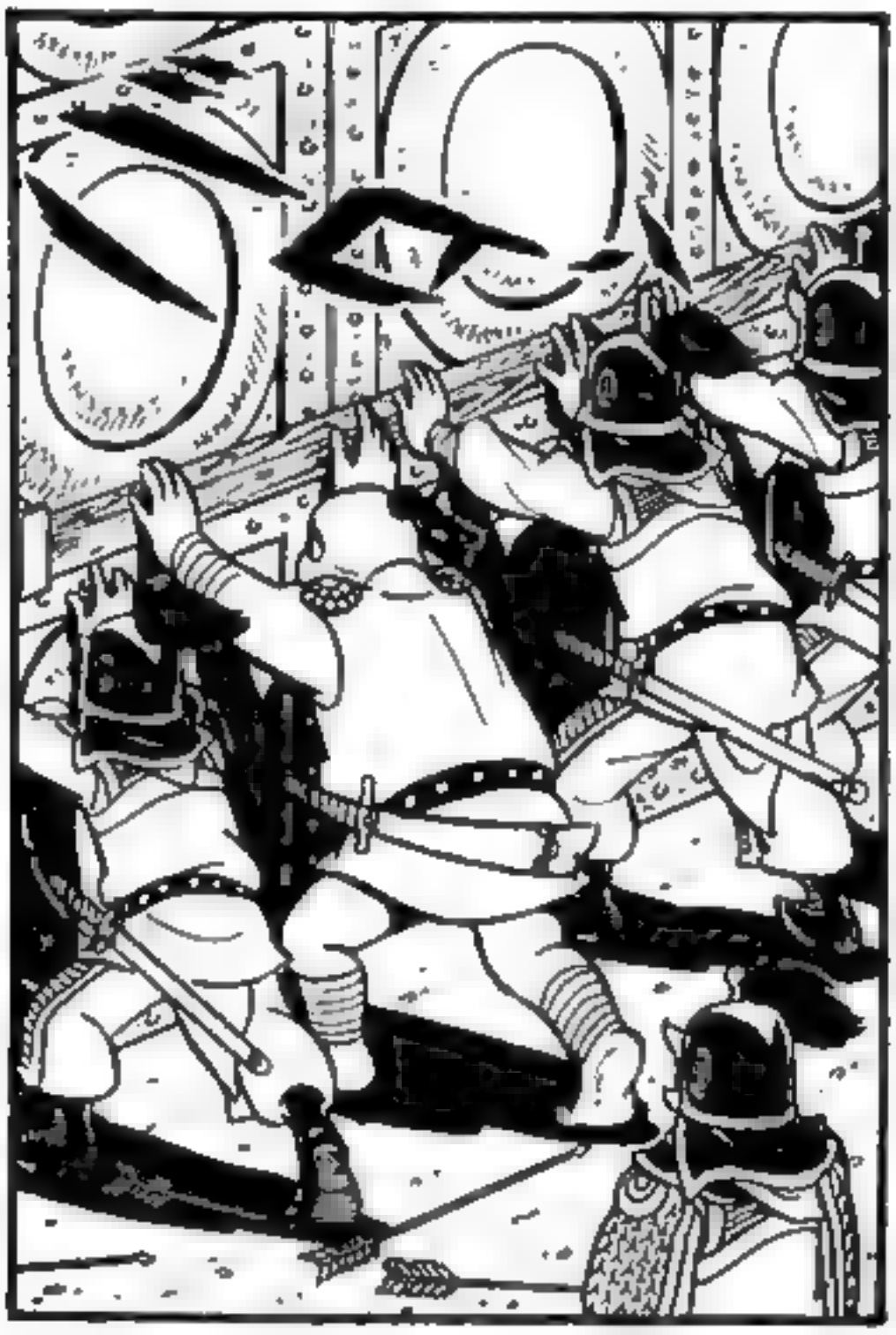

FOR A LONG TIME, THE LANDS OF BEIPING WERE PERIODICALLY ATTACKED BY YUAN SHAO'S FORCES, MAKING GONGSUN ZAN FEEL UNEASY.

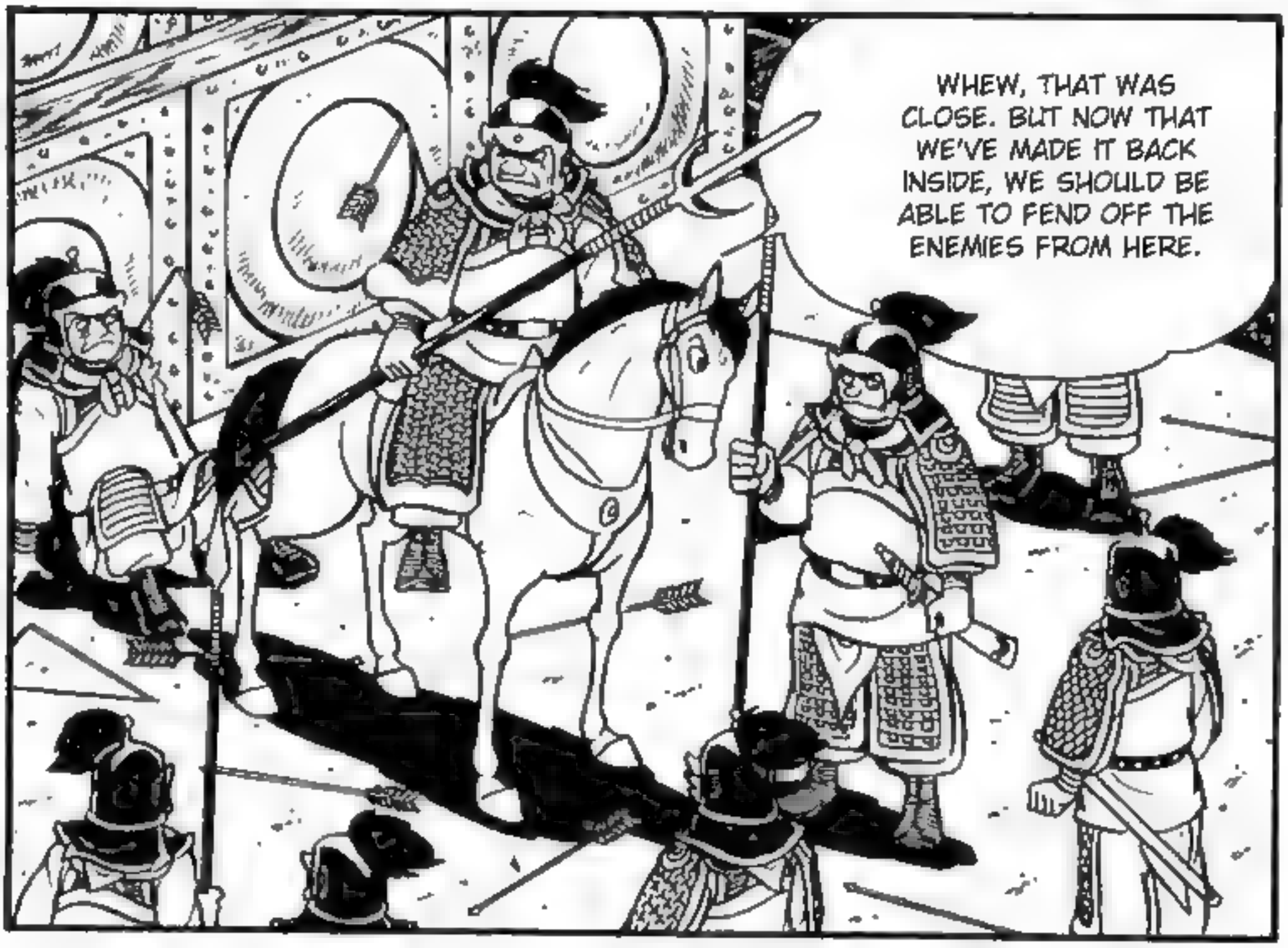

AND SO GONGSUN ZAN CONSTRUCTED A GREAT CASTLE CALLED YIJING TO DEFEND AGAINST YUAN SHAO'S CONSTANT ATTACKS

AFTER YIJING WAS BUILT, YUAN SHAO COULD NO LONGER EASILY ATTACK THE LANDS OF BEIPING AS BEFORE

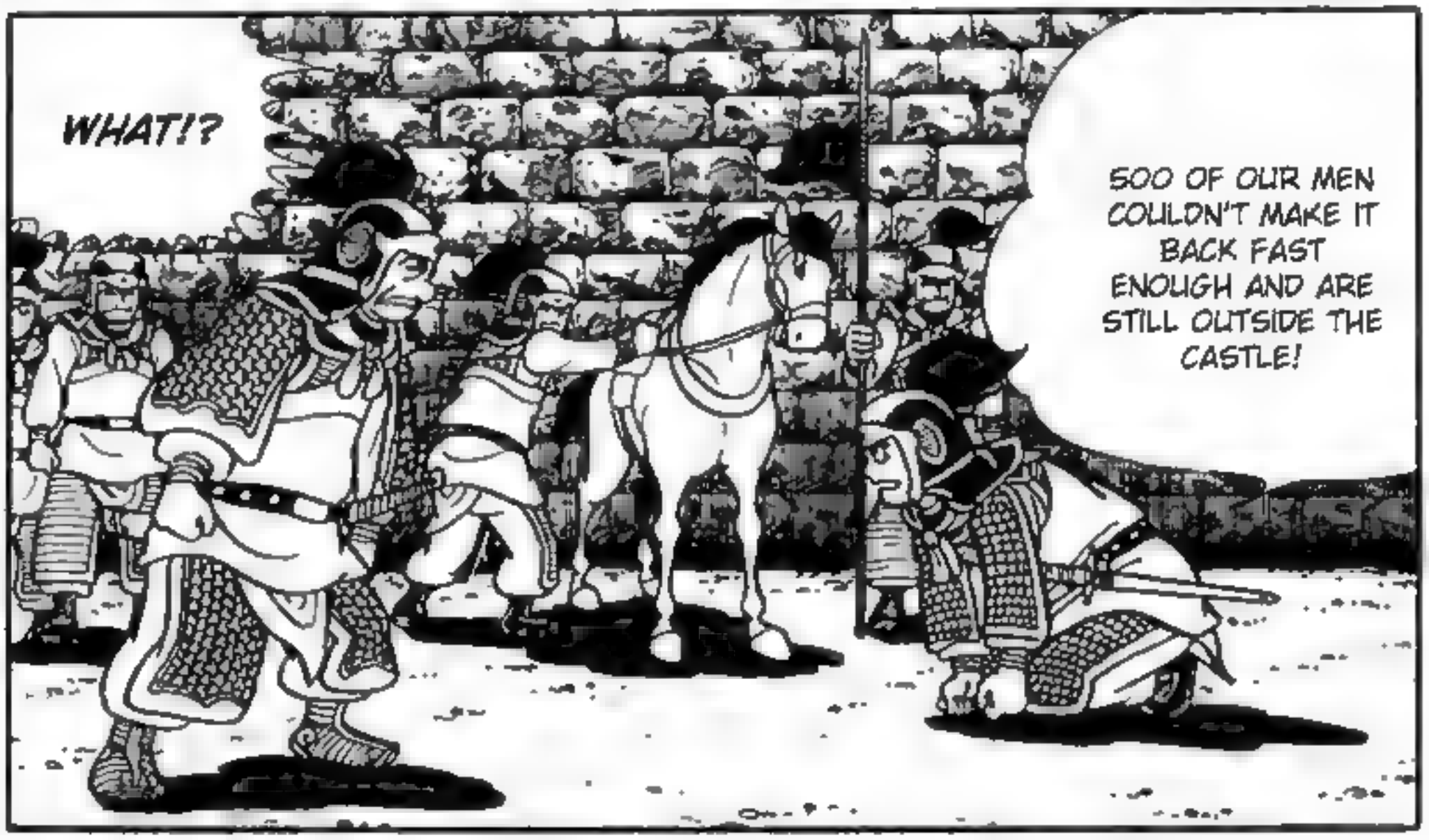
ONE DAY, GONGSUN ZAN'S ARMY FOUGHT A HEATED BATTLE WITH YUAN SHAO'S ARMY OUTSIDE YIJING.

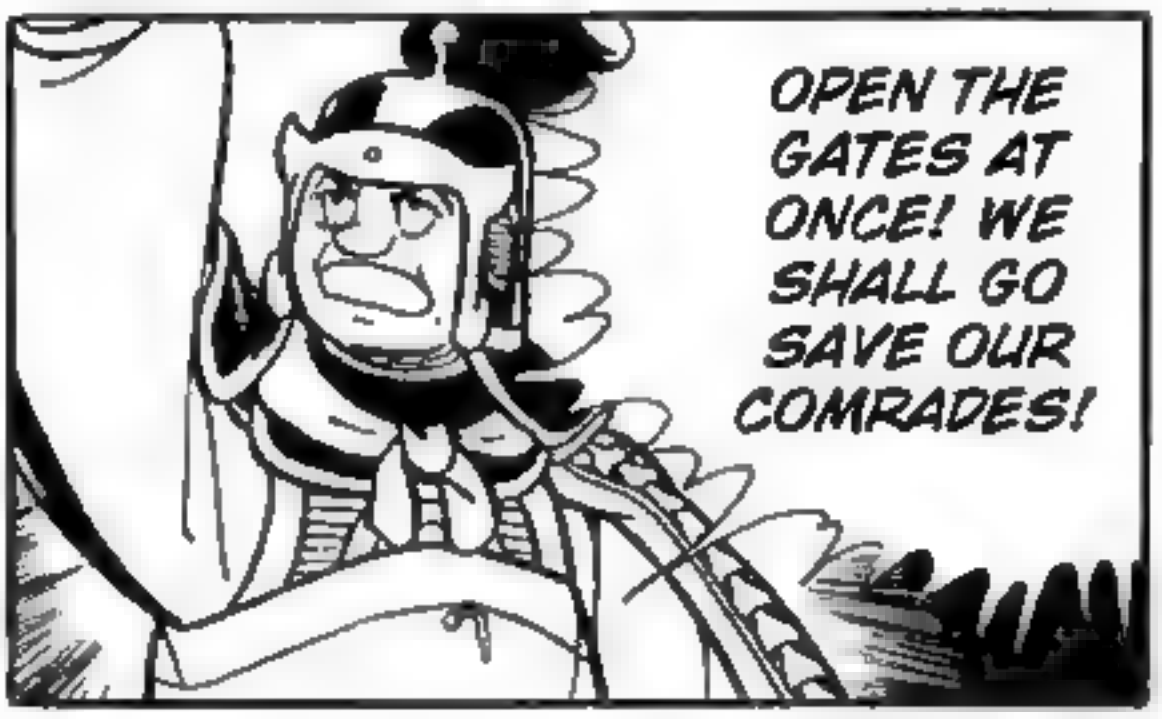
BUT AS THINGS TURNED BAD FOR GONGSUN ZAN'S ARMY, THEY RETREATED BACK INSIDE THE CASTLE




WHEW, THAT WAS CLOSE. BUT NOW THAT WE'VE MADE IT BACK INSIDE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FEND OFF THE ENEMIES FROM HERE.

GENERAL!


WHAT!?
500 OF OUR MEN COULDN'T MAKE IT BACK FAST ENOUGH AND ARE STILL OUTSIDE THE CASTLE!


OPEN THE GATES AT ONCE! WE SHALL GO SAVE OUR COMRADES!

HMM?

WAIT!

YES I KNOW, BUT THE ENEMIES ARE OUT IN FULL FORCE.

BUT THERE ARE STILL 500 OF OUR MEN OUTSIDE THE CASTLE, MY LORD!

IT IS VERY POSSIBLE THAT WE MAY LOSE 1000 MEN JUST TO SAVE THOSE 500 OUTSIDE.

BY TRYING TO GO OUT AND SAVE OUR MEN, WE SHALL ONLY GAIN MORE CASUALTIES.

AND NOT ONLY THAT, IF THE ENEMIES WERE TO BREACH OUR CASTLE GATES, THEN WE WILL ALL PERISH.

UNFORTU-NATELY SO.

S-SO THEN WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO JUST LEAVE 500 OF OUR OWN MEN TO THEIR DEATHS...?

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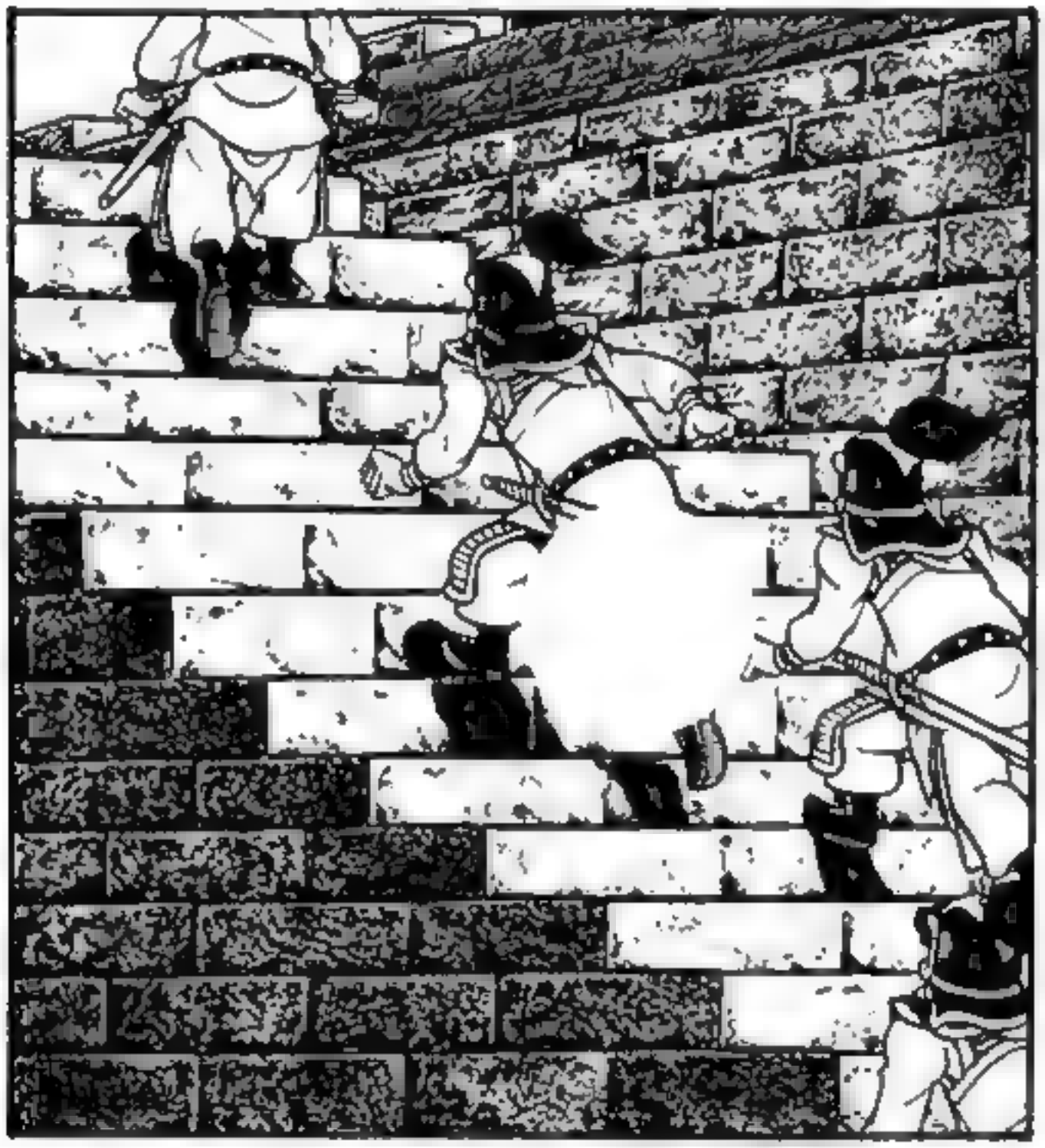


LOOK! OUR COMRADES STILL STUCK OUTSIDE ARE BEING SLAUGHTERED!

AGHHH!

*FLAGS READ (袁)FOR YUAN SHAO, (公) FOR GONGSUN ZAN

MY BROTHER WAS AMONG THOSE 500...
FROM NOW ON, WE BETTER MAKE SURE TO LOOK BEHIND AT OUR CASTLE GATES WHEN WE'RE FIGHTING OUTSIDE...

OUR LORD CONSIDERED THE 500 LIVES OF OUR FRIENDS AS SIMPLE NUMBERS...

HOW'RE WE SUP-POSED TO FIGHT PROPERLY WHEN WE HAVE TO KEEP LOOKING BEHIND OUR SHOULDERS?

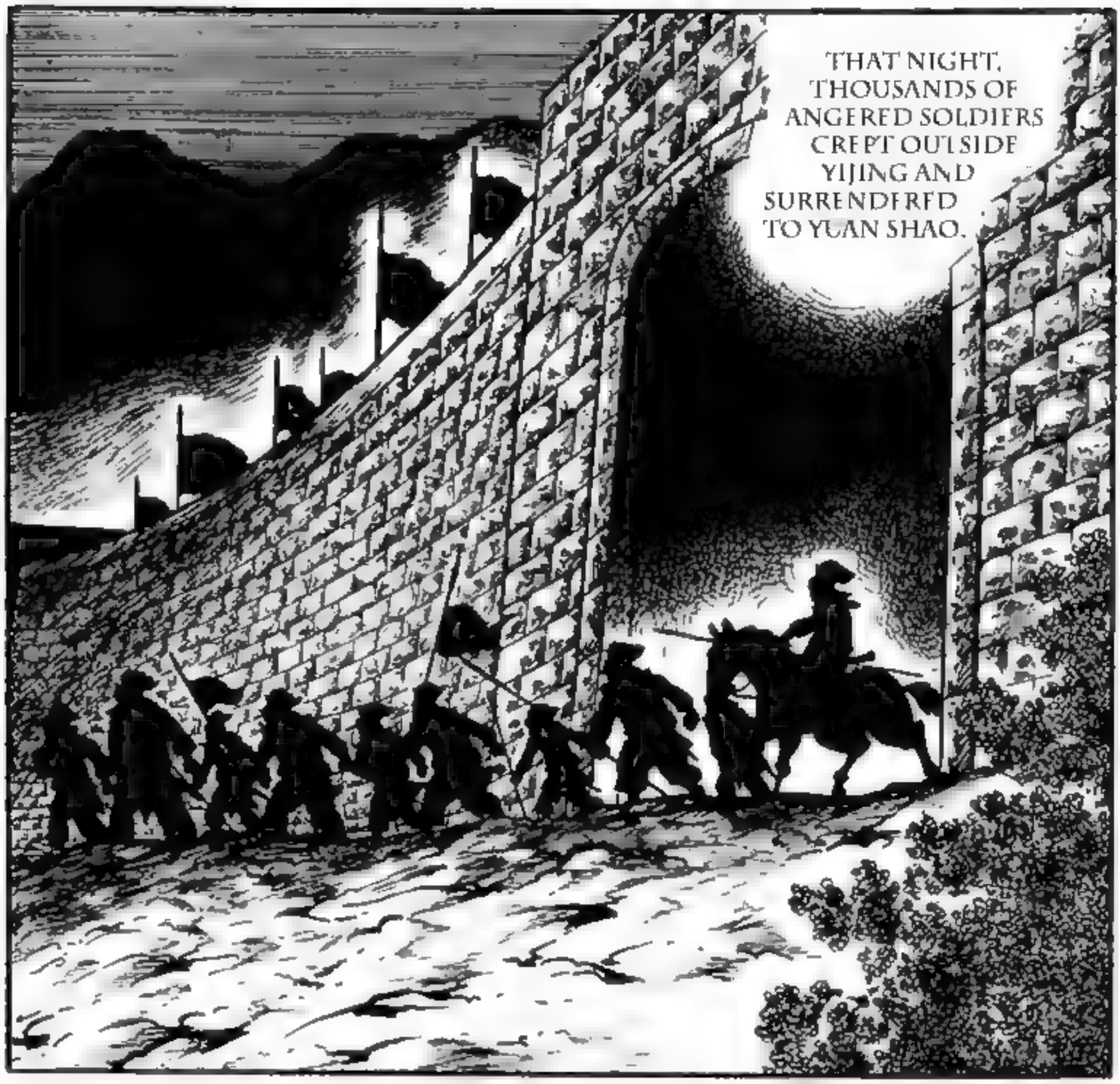
EVERYONE! WHAT SAY WE SHOW OUR HEART-LESS LORD THAT HIS "COMMODITIES" HAVE A MIND OF THEIR OWN!?

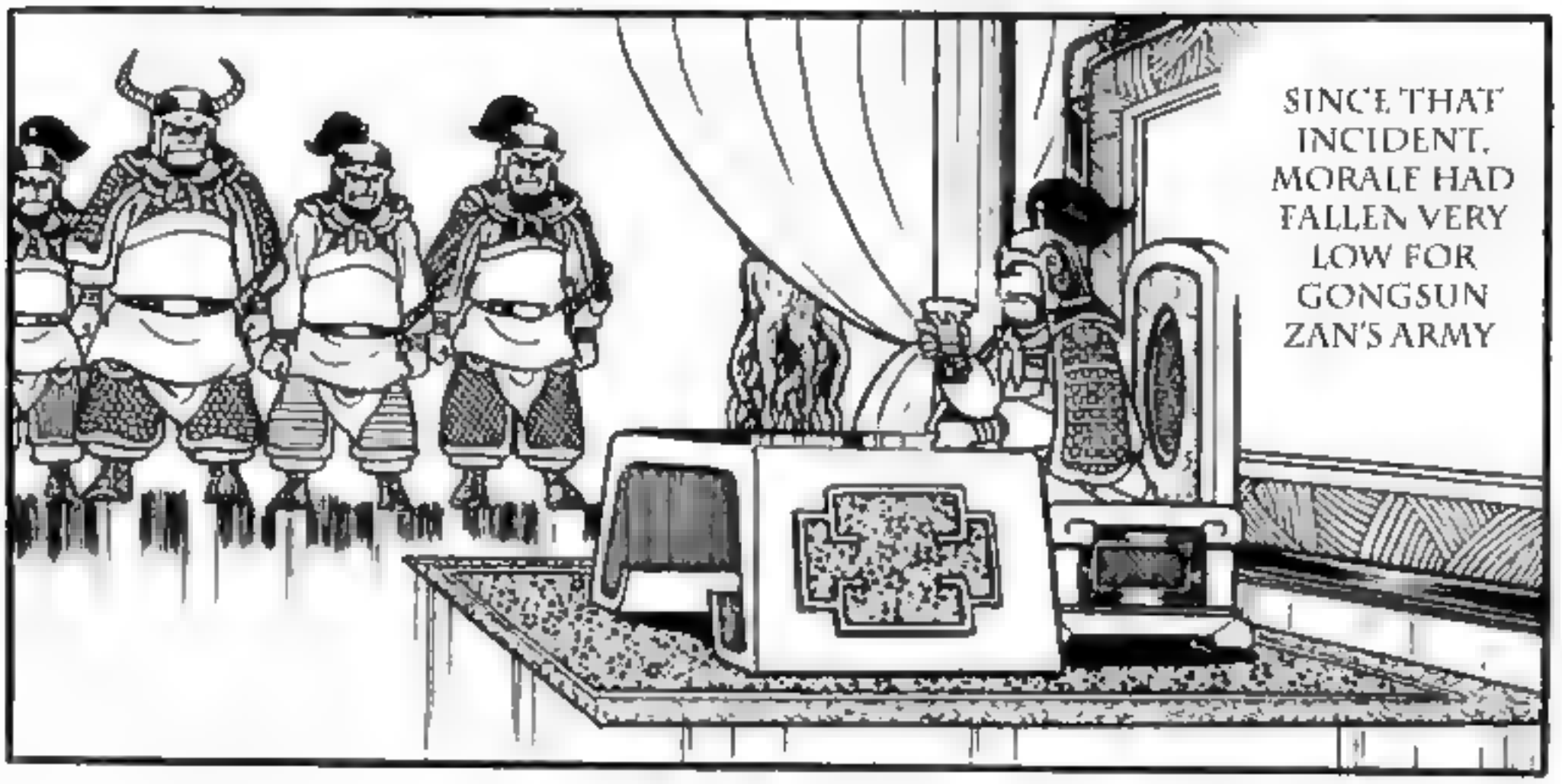
BUT YOU CAN'T JUST TREAT HUMAN LIVES AS MERE NUMBERS. WE'RE NOT COMMODITIES! EVEN A SINGLE LIFE IS PRICELESS!

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY LIVES WE WOULD HAVE HAD TO SACRIFICE, IT WAS MORALLY RIGHT TO GO OUT AND SAVE OUR COMRADES BACK THEN!

IT'S RETRIBUTION FOR LETTING OUR COMRADES DIE!

NOW THAT'S AN IDEA!

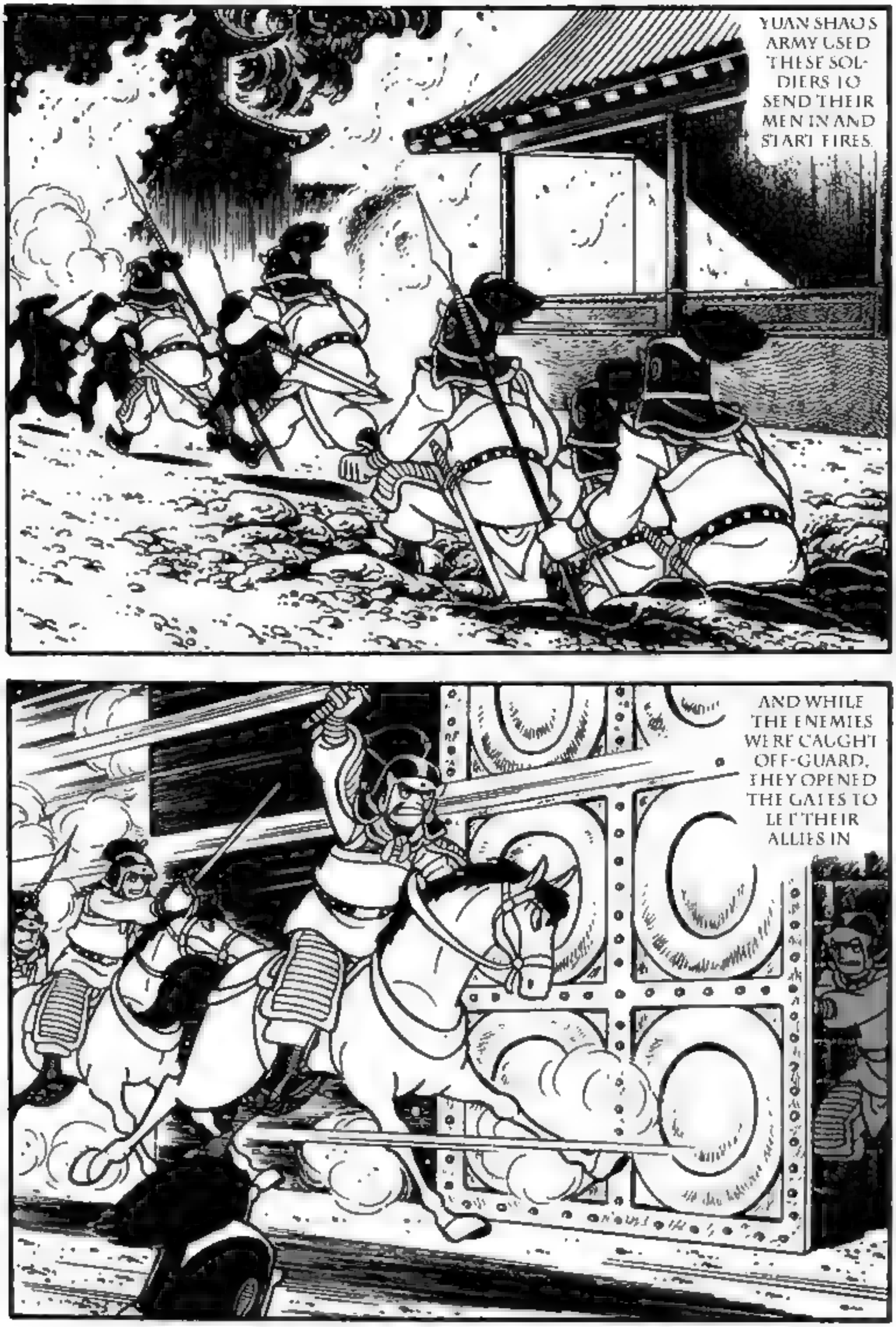

THAT NIGHT, THOUSANDS OF ANGERED SOLDIERS CREPT OUTSIDE YIJING AND SURRENDERED TO YUAN SHAO.

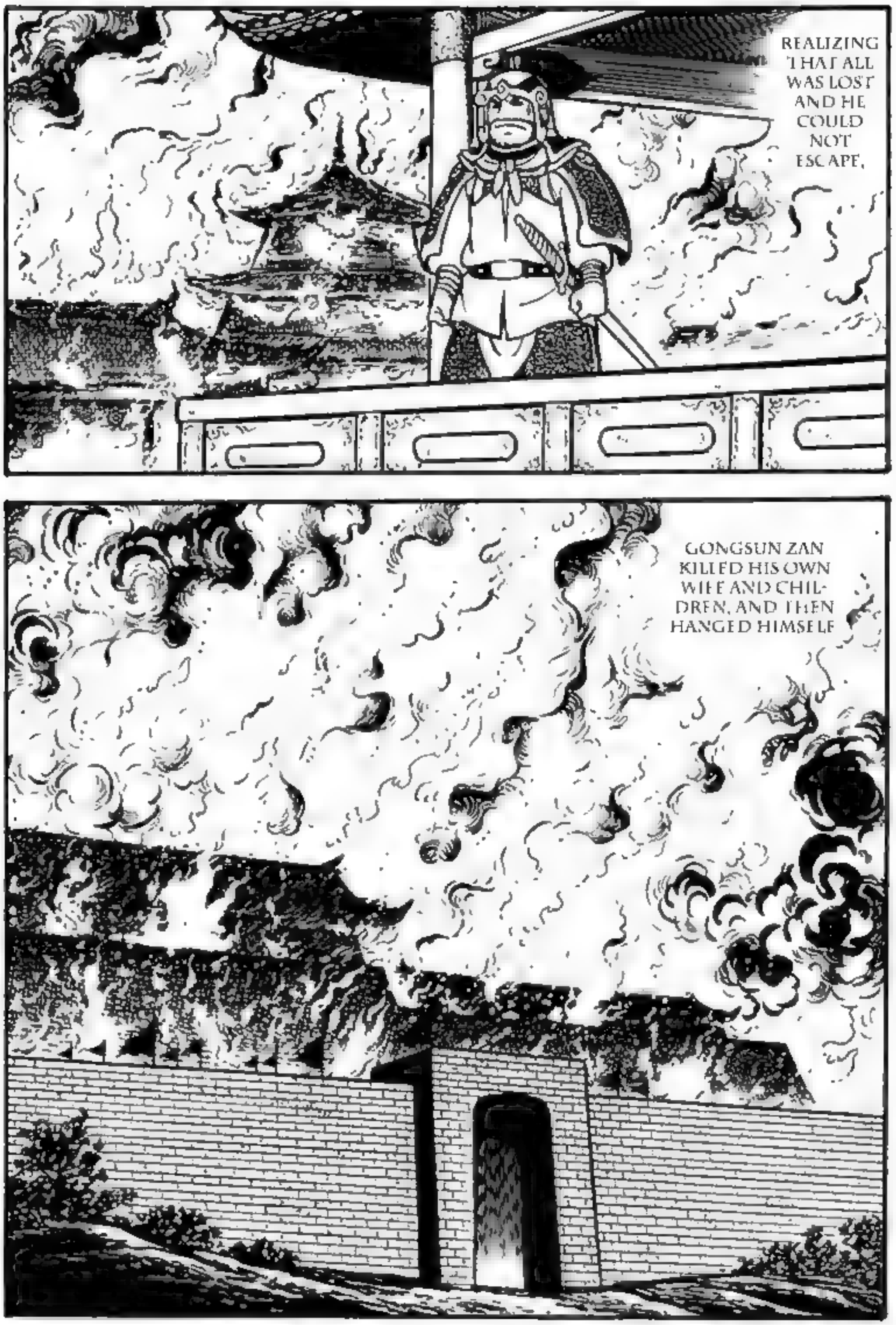

SINCE THAT INCIDENT, MORALE HAD FALLEN VERY LOW FOR GONGSUN ZAN'S ARMY

BUT EVEN SO, THE CASTLE OF YIJING STILL STOOD STRONG.

AND SO YUAN SHAO AND HIS GENERAL DEVISED A PLAN TO TUNNEL UNDER INTO YIJING.

THEY DUG DAY AND NIGHT.
AND FINALLY REACHED BELOW THE CASTLE GROUNDS


YUAN SHAO'S ARMY USED THESE SOLDIERS TO SEND THEIR MEN IN AND START FIRES.
AND WHILE THE ENEMIES WERE CAUGHT OFF-GUARD, THEY OPENED THE GATES TO LET THEIR ALLIES IN


REALIZING THAT ALL WAS LOST AND HE COULD NOT ESCAPE,
GONGSUN ZAN KILLED HIS OWN WIFE AND CHIL- DREN, AND THEN HANGED HIMSELF

I SEE...

AND THAT IS HOW HE MET HIS END, SIR.

HUMAN FATES ARE A CAPRICIOUS THING, INDEED.

WHAT HAPPENED TO YUAN SHAO SINCE THEN?

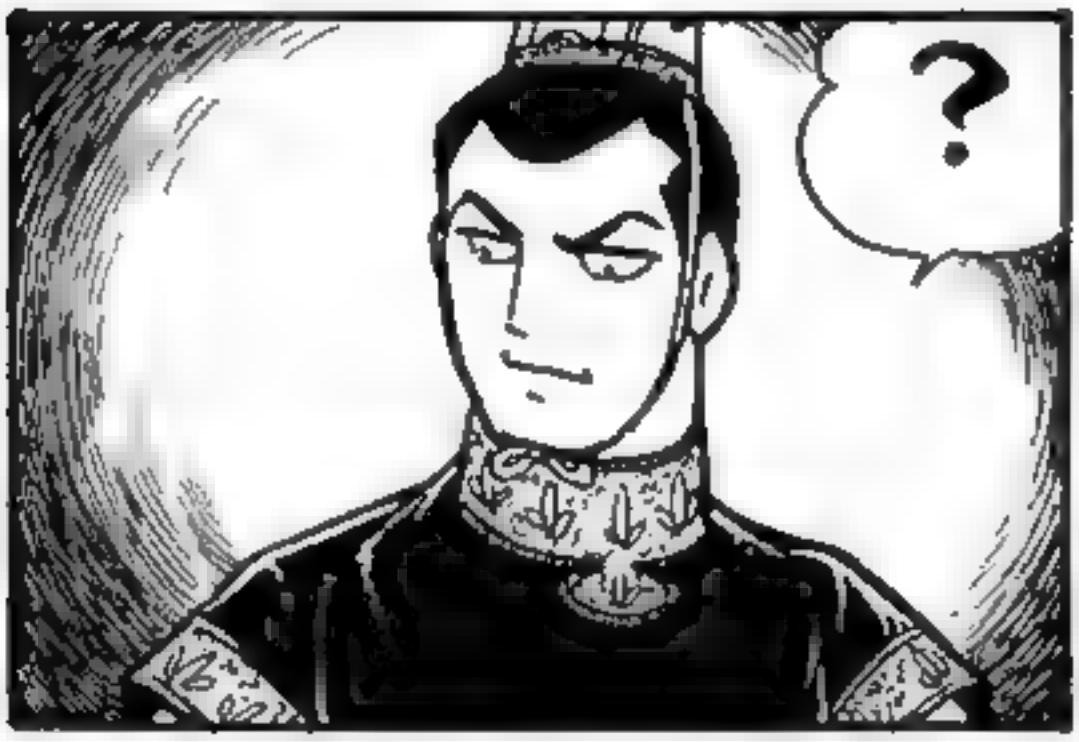
MOREOVER HIS YOUNGER BROTHER YUAN SHU, REALIZING HIS DECREASING POWER AND INFLUENCE, HAS DECIDED TO HAND OVER THE IMPERIAL SEAL AND THRONE TO YUAN SHAO IN RETURN FOR AID.

AFTER DEFEATING GONGSUN ZAN, YUAN SHAO HAS INCREASED BOTH HIS TERRITORY AND ARMY.

YES, MY LORD. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, ONCE THOSE TWO JOIN HANDS, THEY WILL BECOME A GREAT THREAT.

YUAN SHU IS HANDING OVER THE IMPERIAL SEAL TO HIS BROTHER...?

HMM...


?

I HAVE A REQUEST TO ASK OF SIR.

CAN SIR ALLOW ME TO BORROW SOME TROOPS?

ONCE YUAN SHU AND YUAN SHAO JOIN HANDS TOGETHER, THEY WILL BECOME A SERIOUS THREAT TO SIR, AND IT IS PLAINLY OBVIOUS THAT THEY WILL AGGRESSIVELY TRY TO EXPAND THEIR TERRITORIES.

WHY? WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH THEM?

AND SO IF SIR WILL GRANT ME AN ARMY, I SHALL ANNHILATE YUAN SHU'S FORCES AT XUZHOU, THEREBY PREVENTING A DANGEROUS ALLIANCE.

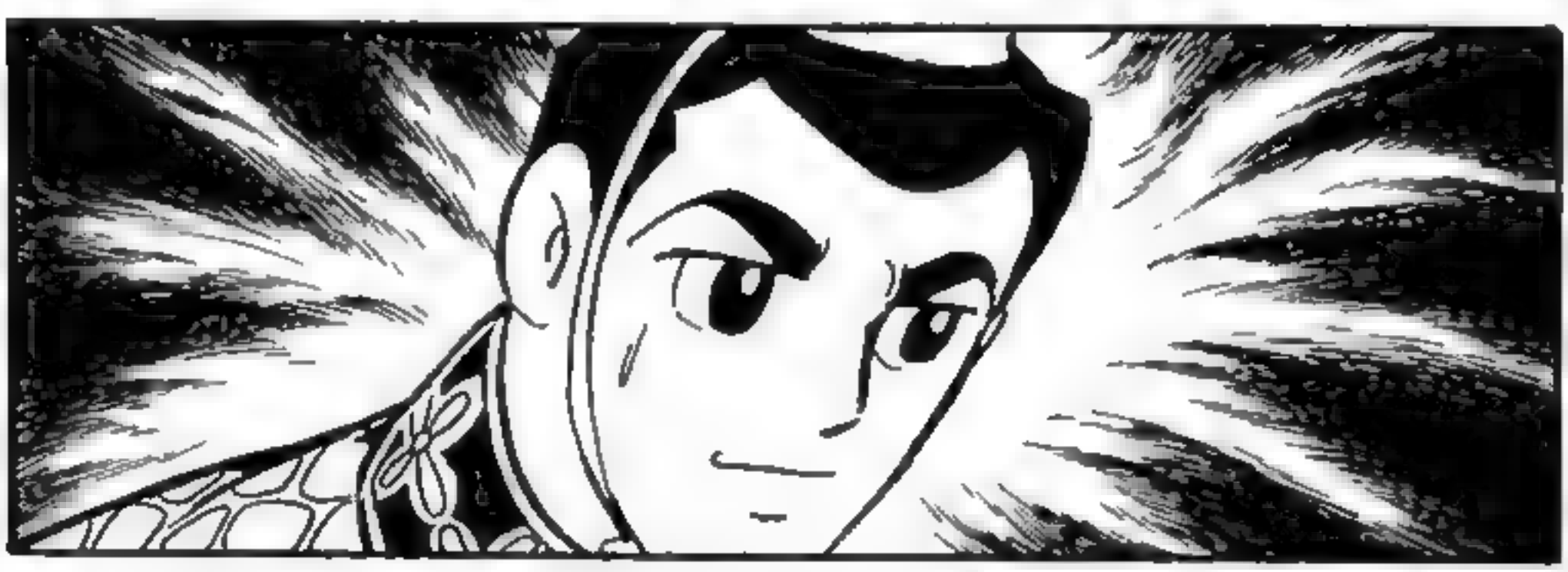
YUAN SHU MUST PASS THROUGH XUZHOU IN ORDER TO MEET HIS BROTHER IN JIZHOU.

HMM, I SEE...

AND BY FOILING YUAN SHU AND YUAN SHAO'S PLANS, I SHALL BE ABLE TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF GONSUN ZAN.

ALRIGHT, THEN I SHALL INFORM HIS HIGHNESS OF YOUR PLAN AND GRANT YOU PERMISSION.

THANK YOU, SIR.



YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.
YOU'RE LEAVING, IMPERIAL UNCLE LIU?

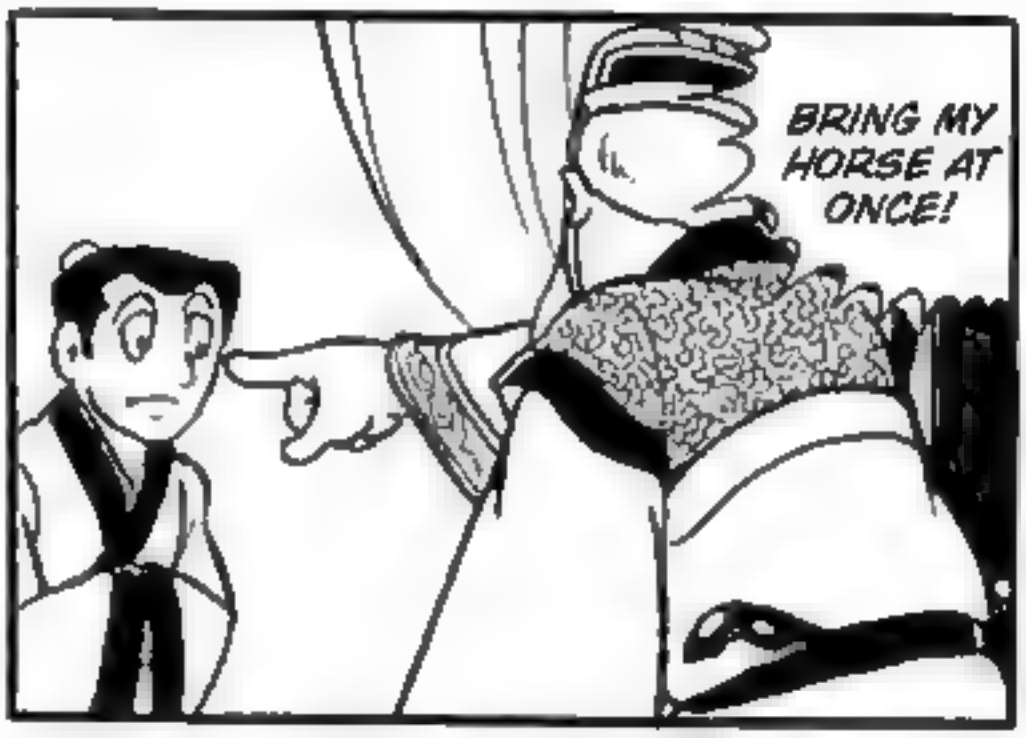
THANK YOU FOR THE KIND WORS, YOUR HIGHNESS.

I SHALL SORELY MISS YOUR COMPANY.

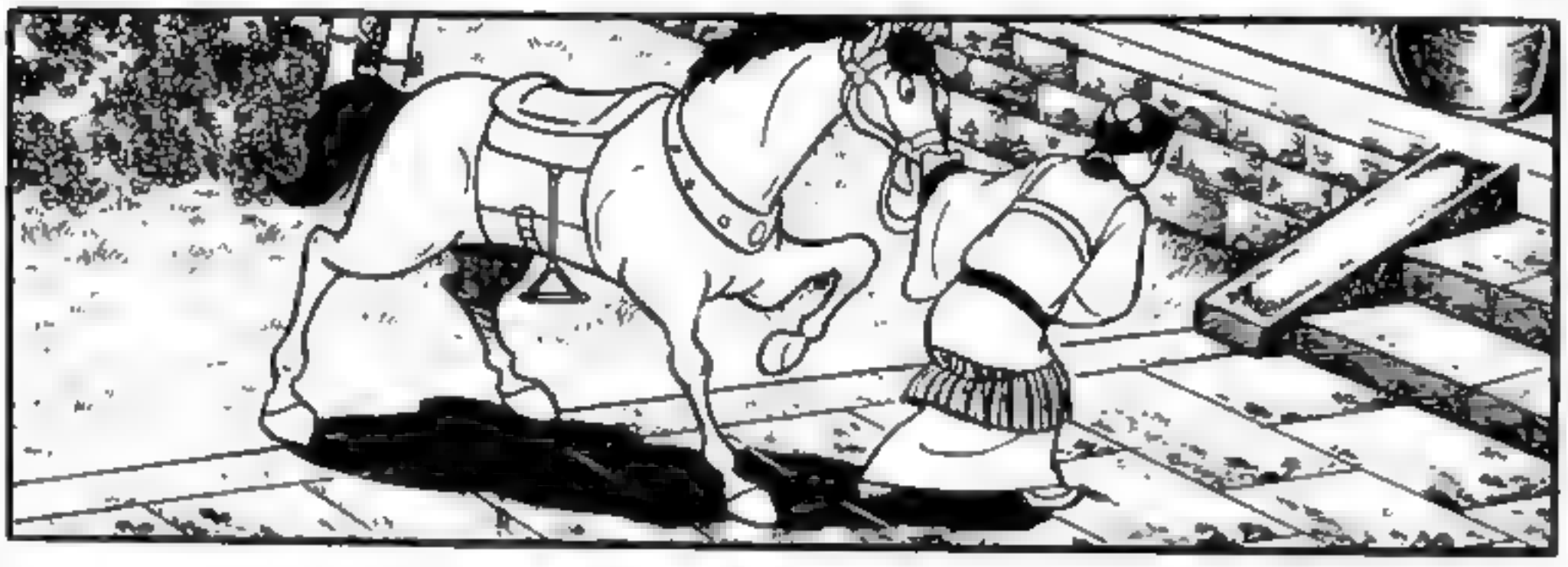
THEN I SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE NOW, YOUR HIGH-NESS.

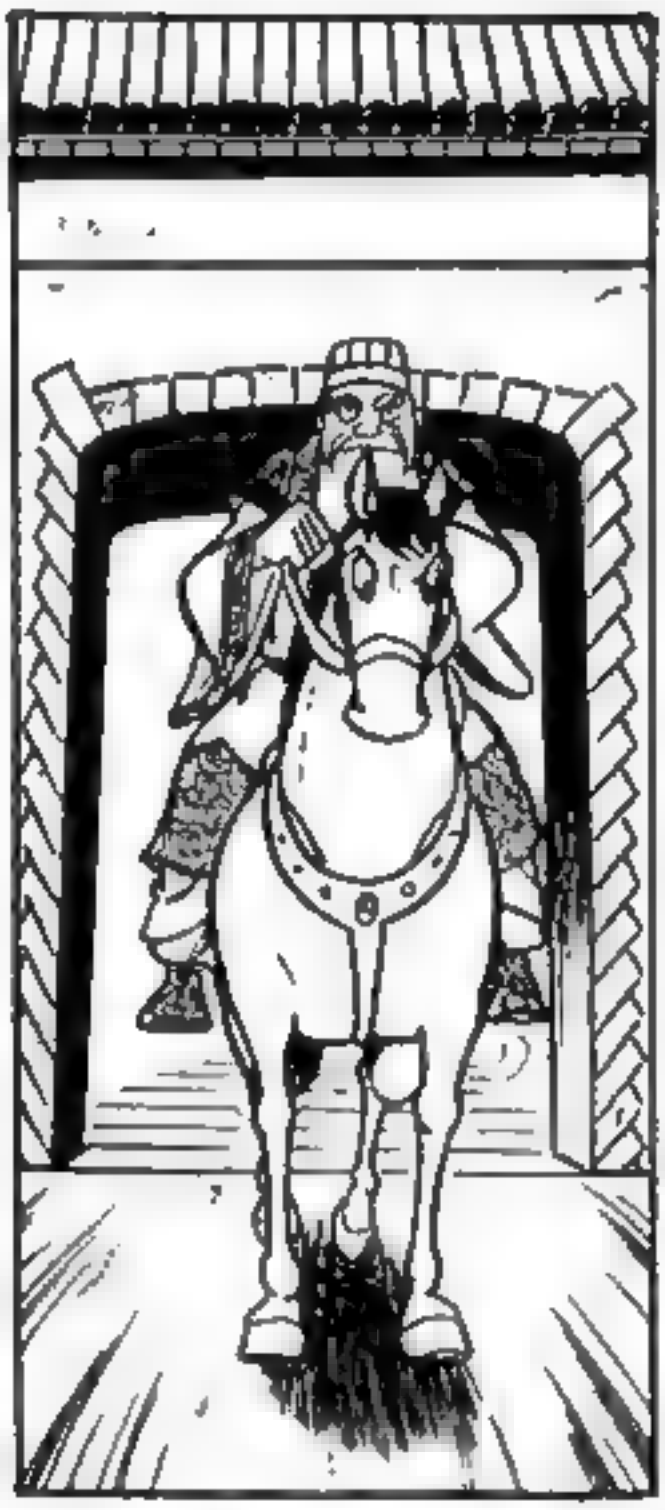
LET US DEPART FOR XUZHOU!

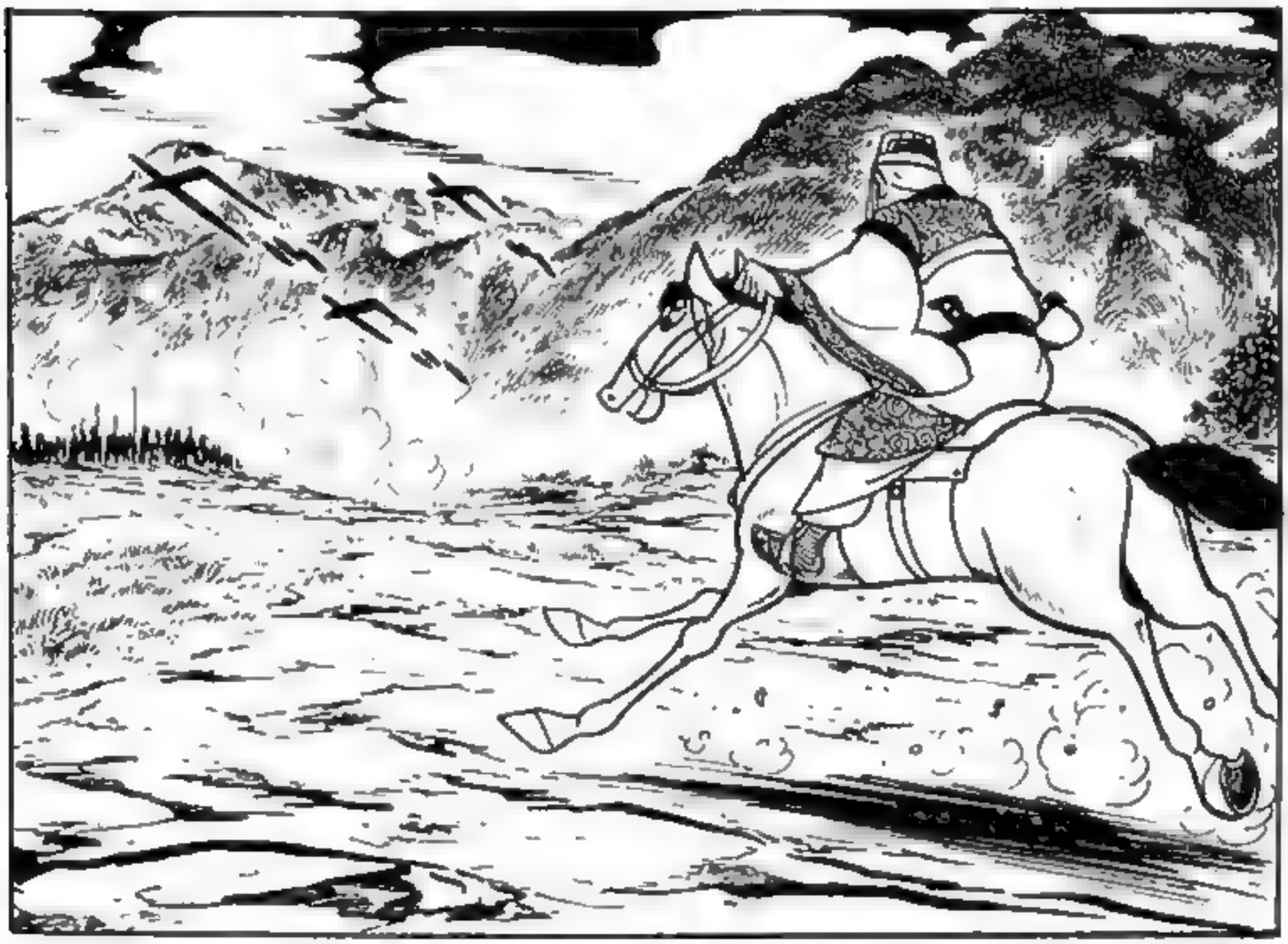
WHAT!? LIU BEI IS DEPARTING FOR XUZHOU!?


BRING MY HORSE AT ONCE!

I WONDER WHY HE IS LEAVING AT SUCH AN IMPORTANT TIME...







LIU BEI!
LIU BEI!

WHY ARE YOU SUDDENLY LEAVING THE CAPITAL AFTER OUR PROMISE?

AH, HELLO, SIR.

I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN ABOUT OUR PROMISE, SIR. BUT CONSIDERING CAO CAO'S SUSPICIOUS NATURE, I BELIEVE THAT HE MIGHT CATCH WIND OF WHAT'S GOING ON IF I STAY HERE TOO LONG.

AND SO I BELIEVE THAT GOING TO XUZHOU WILL HELP OUR PLAN IN THE LONG-RUN.

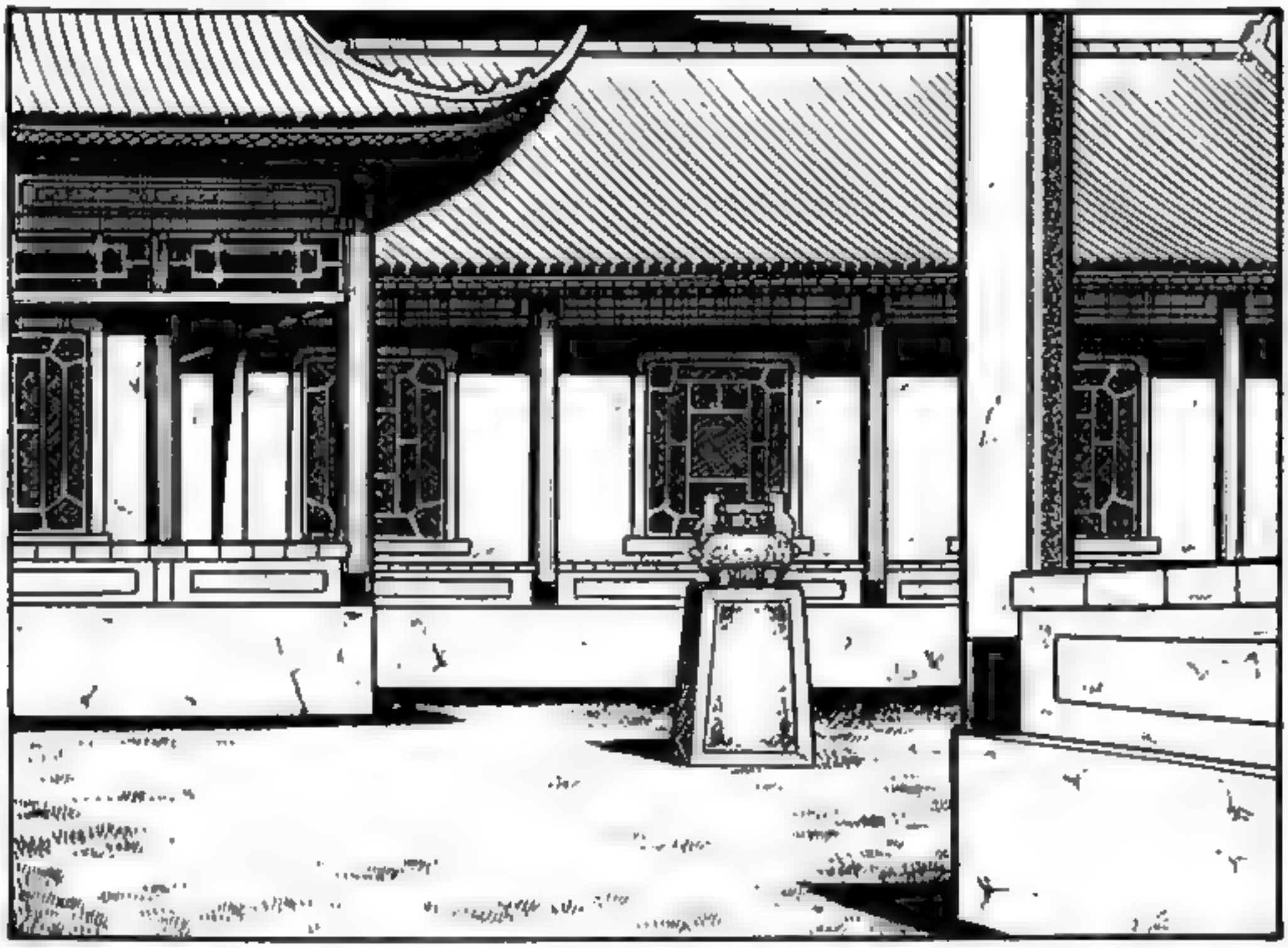
IF I REMAIN IN XUCHANG, I SHALL BE JUST A BIRD IN A CAGE, A FISH IN A NET. BUT BY GOING OUT, I AM NOW A FISH RELEASED INTO THE WIDE OCEAN, OR A BIRD SOARING INTO THE BLUE SKIES.
I SHALL HAVE MORE FREEDOM TO ACCOMPLISH GREATER THINGS.

PLEASE TAKE CARE IN THE MEANWHILE, SIR.

AH, I SEE!

GOOD BYE.

HE CERTAINLY IS AN IMPRESSIVE MAN.



WHAT IS IT, GUO JIA?
MY LORD!

YES, I GAVE HIM AN ARMY SO THAT YUAN SHU CAN BE ELIMINATED FOR GOOD.

I'VE JUST HEARD THAT SIR HAS GIVEN LIU BEI 50,000 TROOPS. IS THIS TRUE, MY LORD?

THE TIGER HAS NOW BEEN GIVEN WINGS.

I'M AFRAID TO SAY THAT MY LORD HAS BEEN FOOLED BY LIU BEI.

B-BUT SIR...!

DOES MY LORD BELIEVE LIU BEI TO BE A HARMLESS INDIVIDUAL?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THEN WHY THE SUDDEN CHANGE OF OPINIONS, MY LORD?

T-THAT'S ...

WELL, I USED TO THINK THAT TOO, BUT...

I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THERE IS NO OTHER MAN AS DANGEROUS AS LIU BEI.

NO, I AM QUITE SURE THAT HE WILL INDEED ATTACK YUAN SHU.

ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT HE WAS EVEN LYING ABOUT ATTACKING YUAN SHU!?

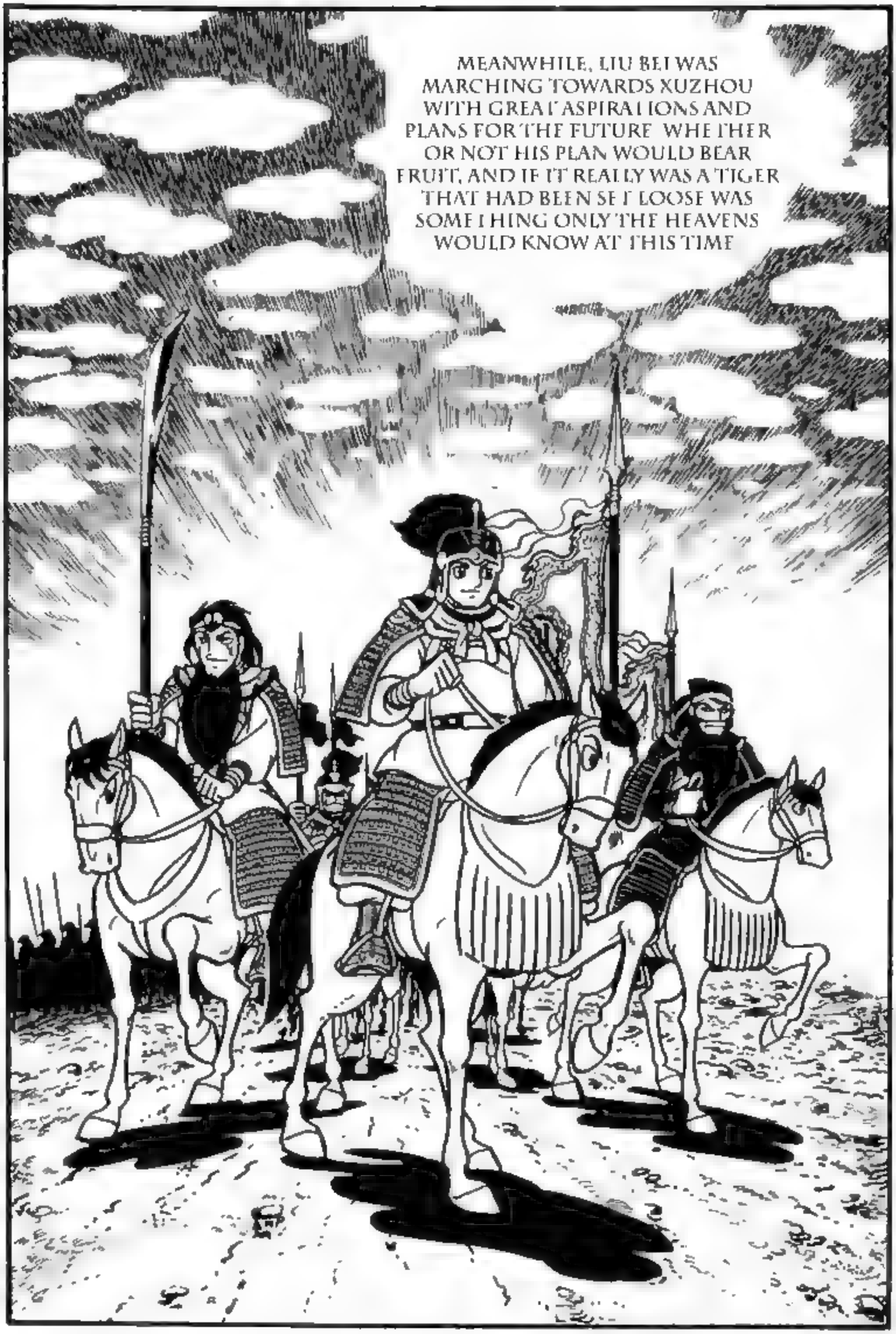
WAS MY LORD FOOLED BY HIS CHILDISH FEAR OF THUNDERS AND HIS GARDENING?

BUT HE IS DOING THAT ONLY FOR HIMSELF AND NO OTHER. HE IS MOST DEFINITELY NOT DOING IT FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF MY LORD.

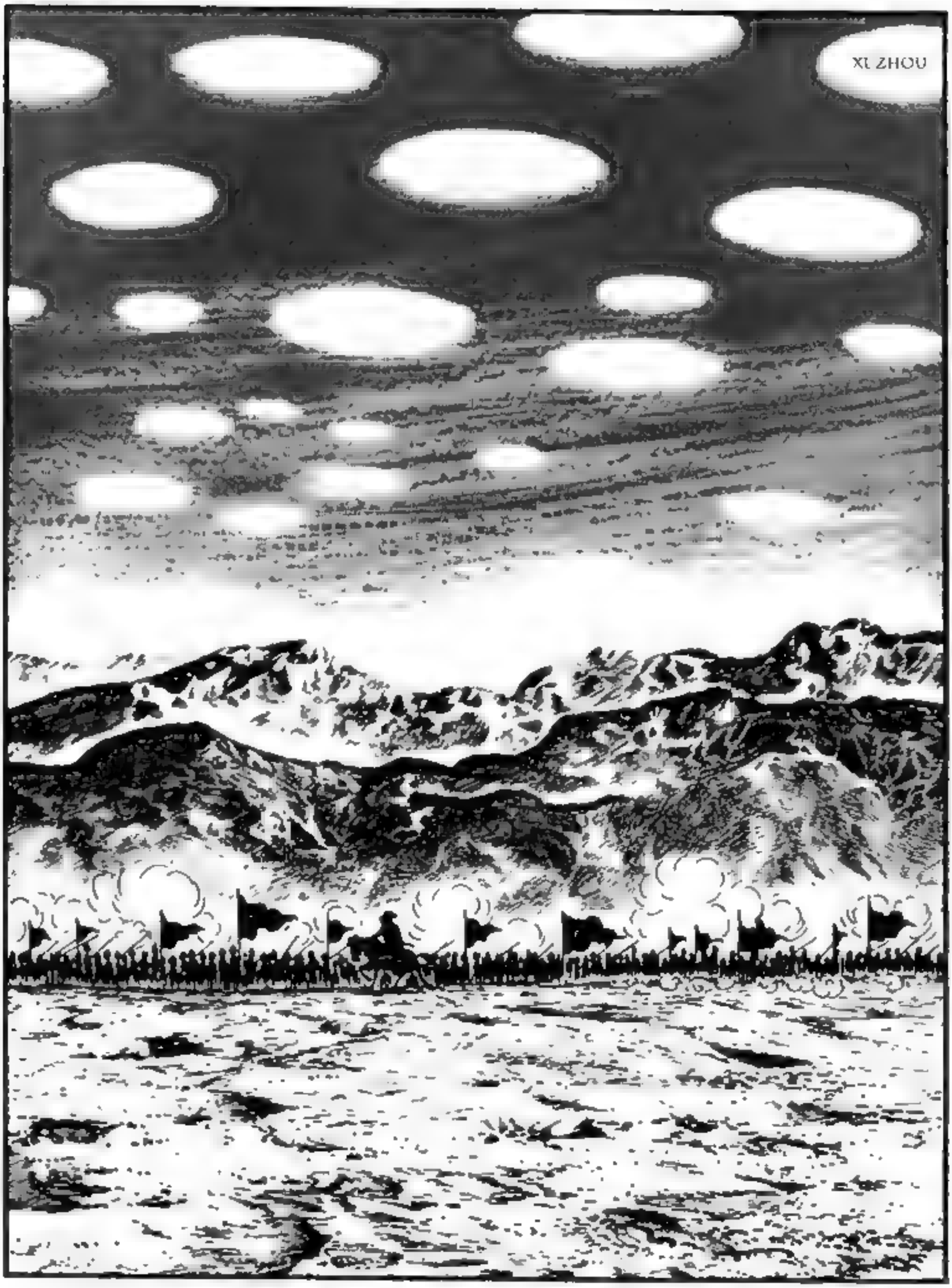
I AM WORRIED THAT MY LORD MIGHT HAVE LOOSED A TIGER OUT INTO THE FIELDS.

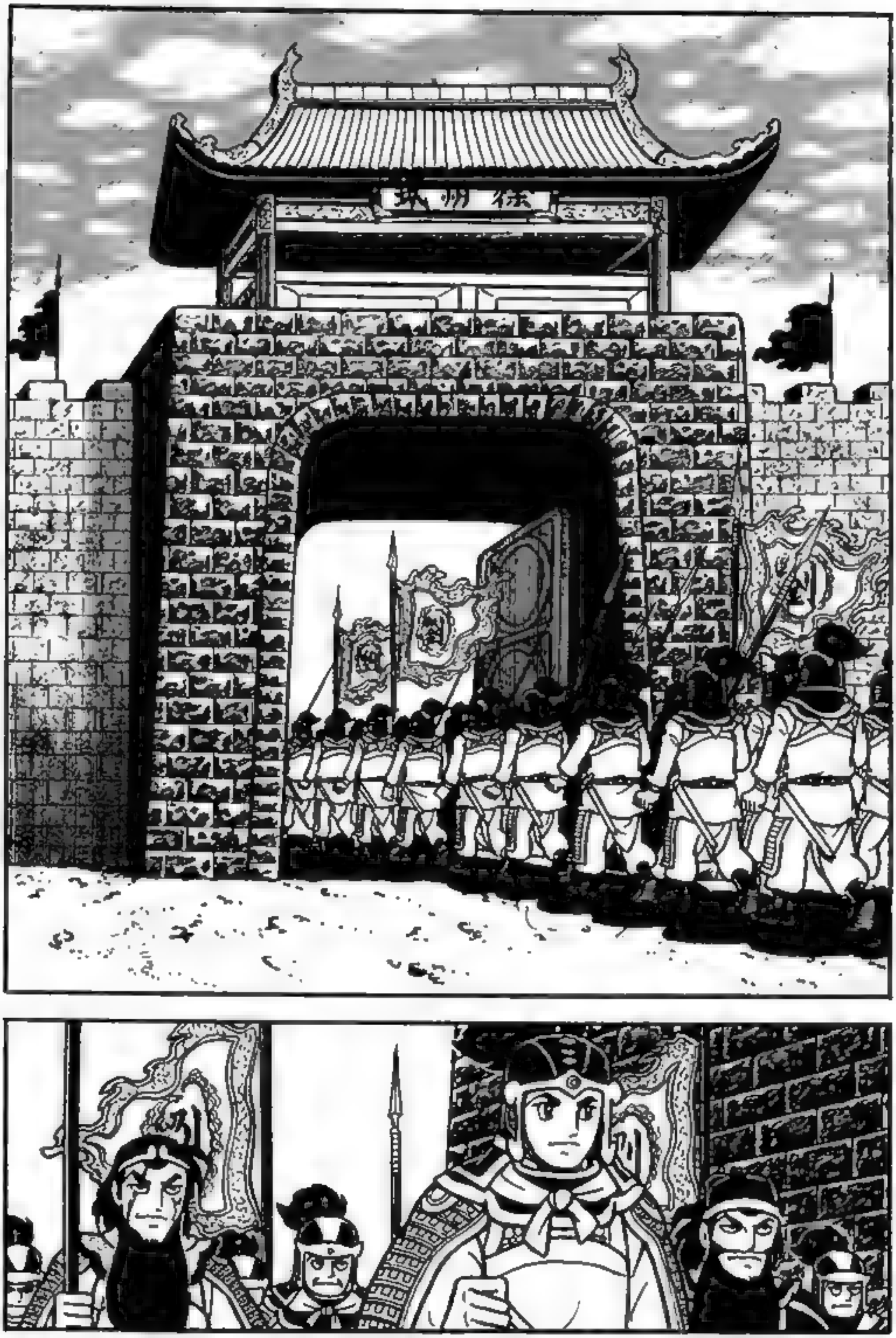
CAO CAO FELT A SHIVER DOWN HIS SPINE AS HE REGRETTED HIS MISTAKE

YES... YOU MAY BE QUITE RIGHT...


MEANWHILE, LIU BEI WAS
MARCHING TOWARDS XUZHOU
WITH GREAT ASPIRATIONS AND
PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. WHETHER
OR NOT HIS PLAN WOULD BEAR
FRUIT, AND IF IT REALLY WAS A TIGER
THAT HAD BEEN SET LOOSE WAS
SOMETHING ONLY THE HEAVENS
WOULD KNOW AT THIS TIME

YUAN SHU'S END





THANK YOU FOR TAKING GOOD CARE OF XUZHOU WHILE I WAS GONE, CHE ZOU.

AH, IF IT ISN'T LIU BEI. AND WHAT BRINGS SIR HERE WITH SUCH A LARGE ARMY?

YUAN SHU!?

CHANCELLOR CAO CAO HAS GIVEN ME THIS ARMY TO ATTACK THE FALSE EMPEROR, YUAN SHU.

AND SO THE CHANCELLOR HAS LENT ME THIS ARMY TO ELIMINATE YUAN SHU BEFORE HE BECOMES A GREATER THREAT.

YES, YUAN SHU IS JOINING FORCES WITH HIS BROTHER, WHO AGREED TO TAKE HIM IN AS LONG AS YUAN SHU HANDS OVER THE IMPERIAL SEAL.

WELL, I'M SURE SIR IS QUITE TIRED AFTER THE LONG TRIP BACK. I SHALL PREPARE A PROPER WELCOMING BANQUET.

I SEE.

ALRIGHT, LET US MAKE THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BANQUET RIGHT AWAY.

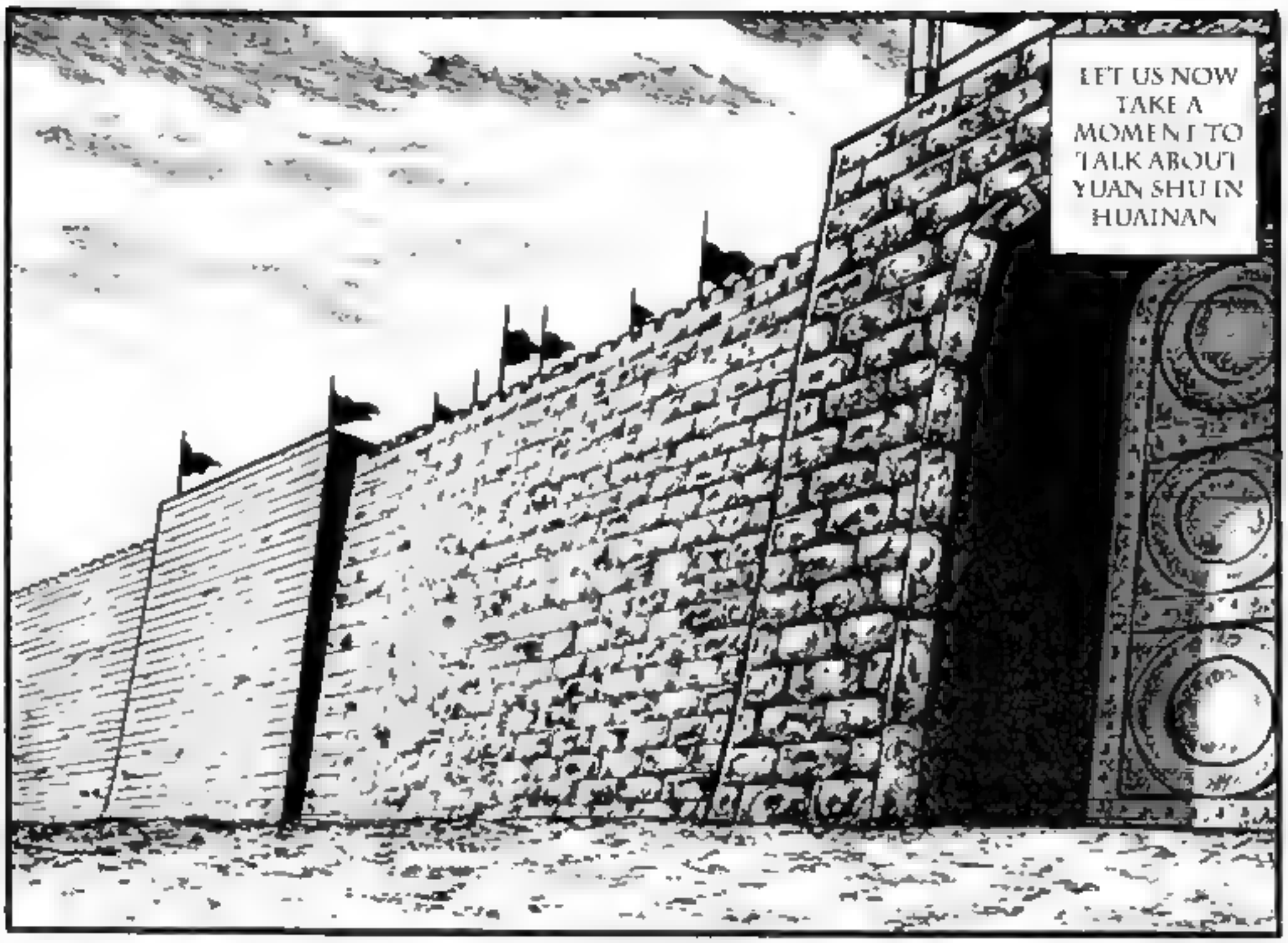
I MUST NOT LET MY GUARD DOWN IN FRONT OF HIM...

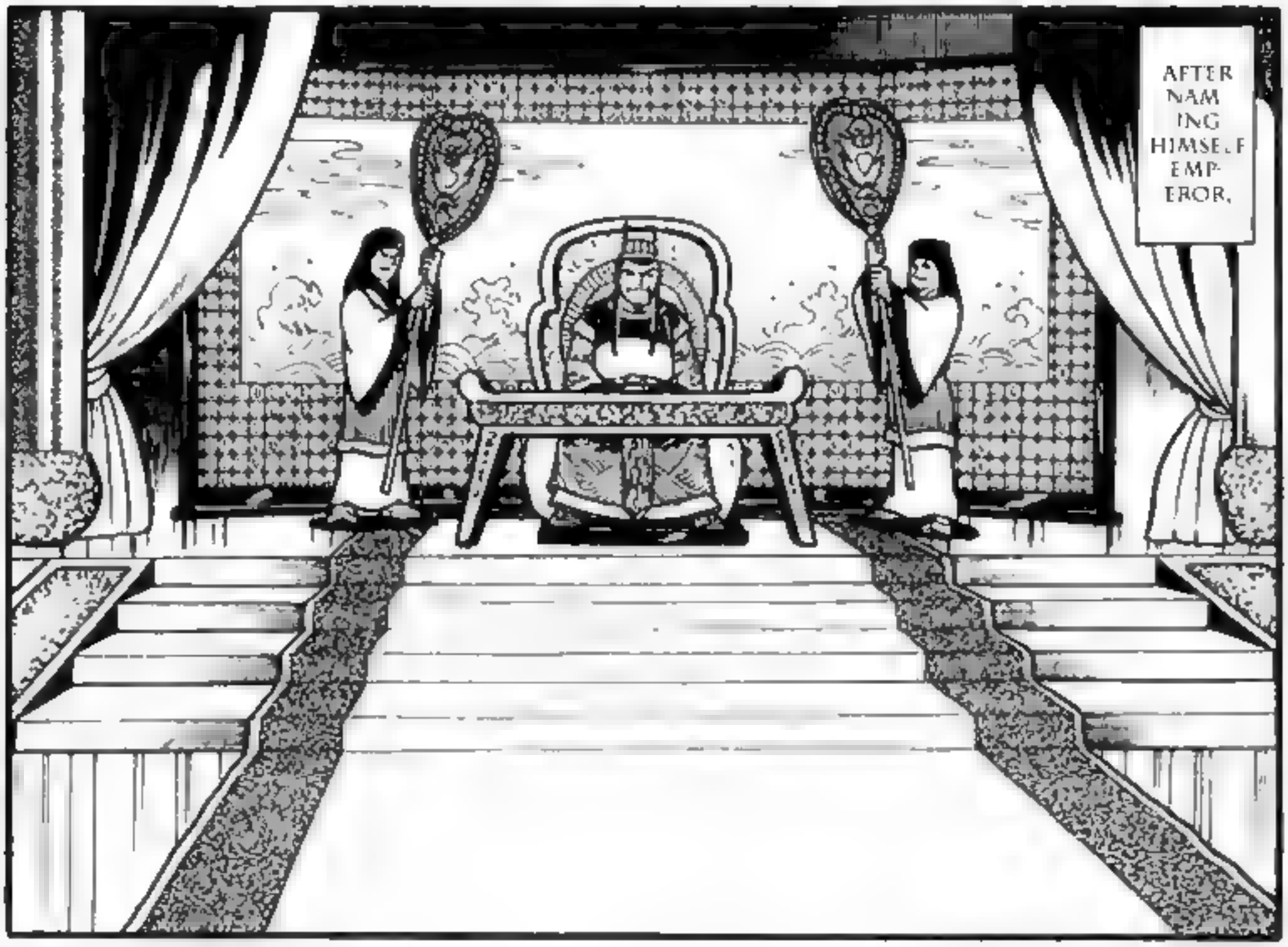
THAT MAN IS THE DEPUTY IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF XUZHOU, PLACED IN CHARGE OF HERE WHILE I WAS GONE BY CAO CAO. IN SHORT, HE IS ONE OF CAO CAO'S MEN.

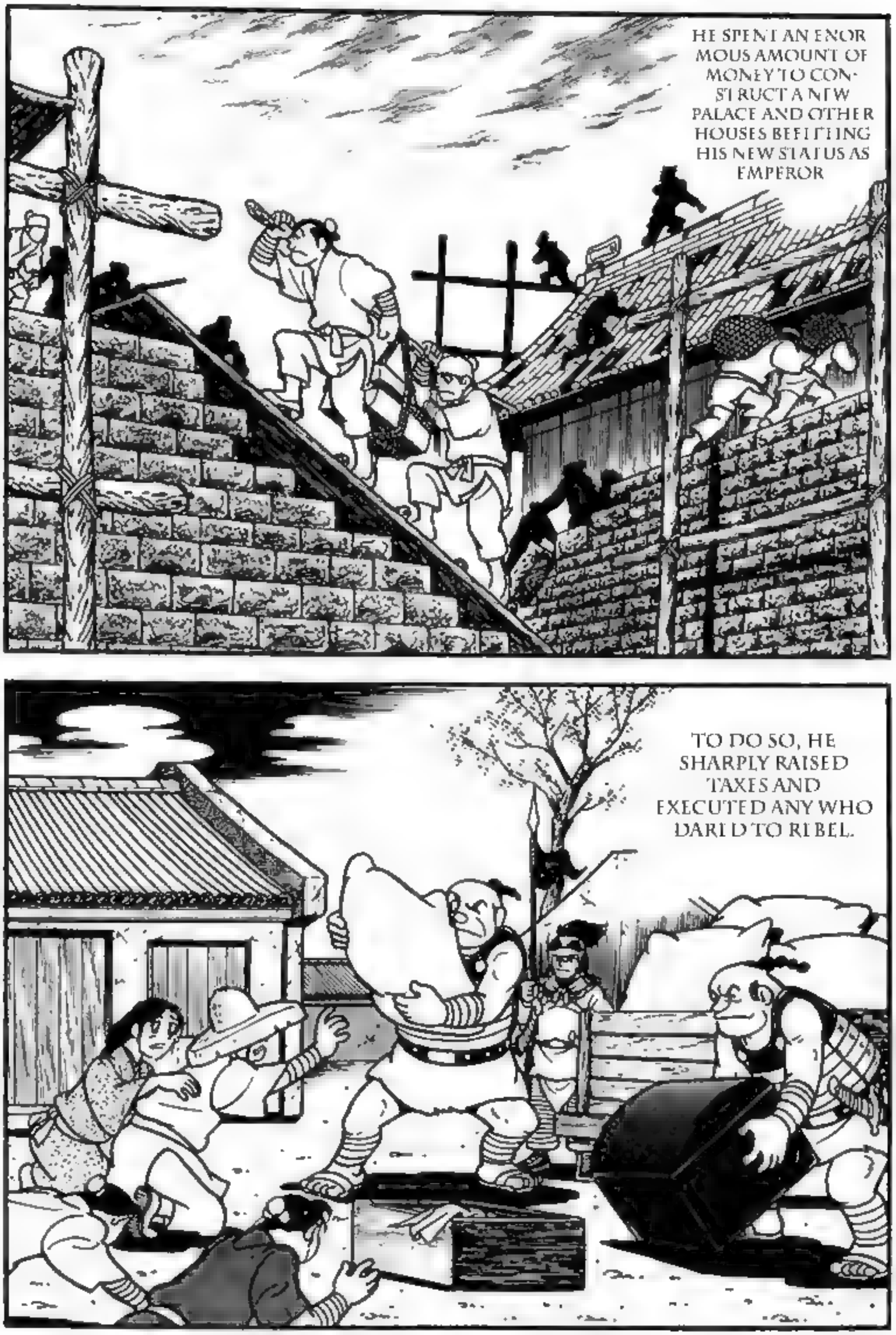
HA HA HA HA!

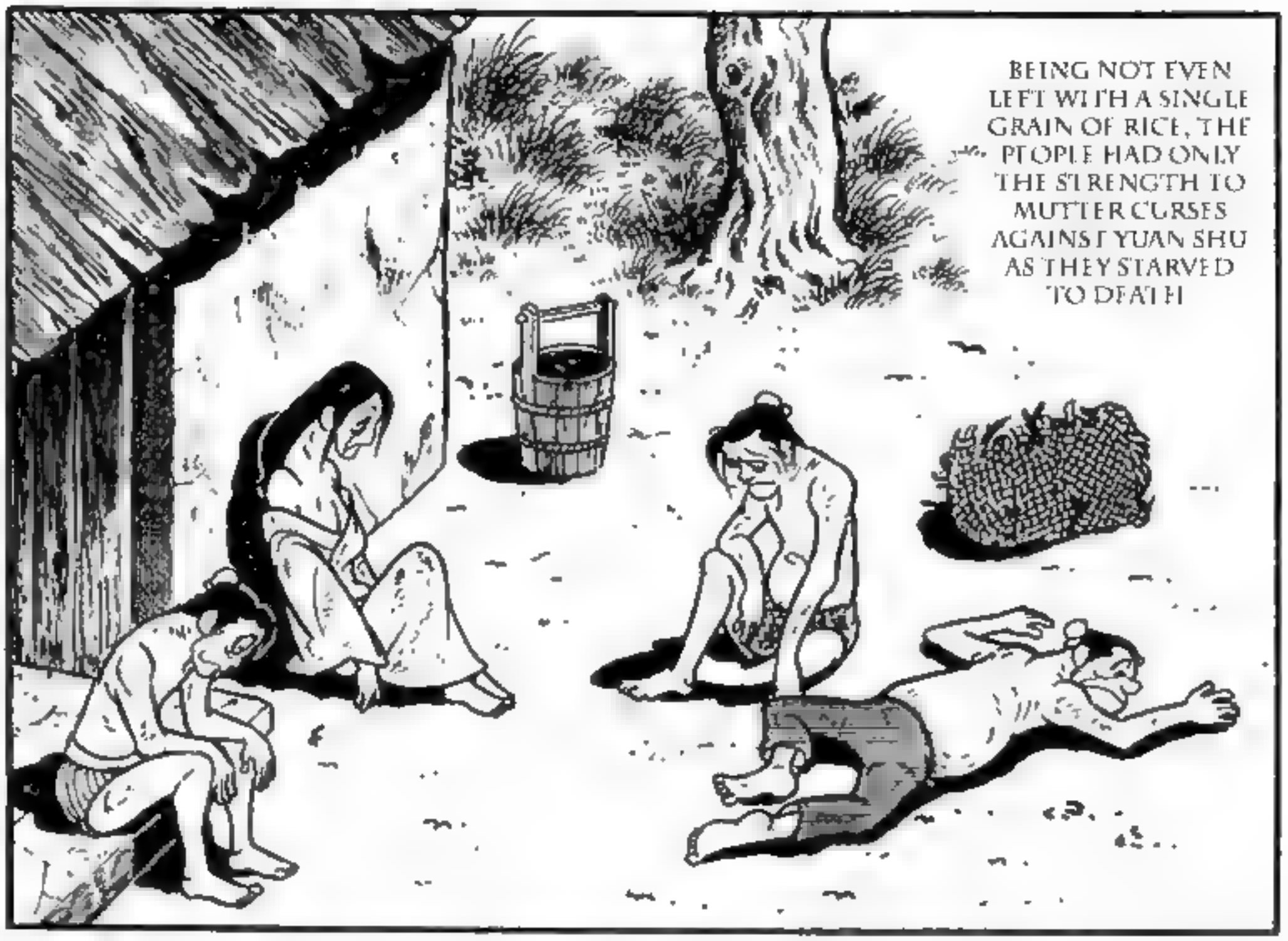
XUZHOU FINALLY FEELS LIKE A PROPER HOME NOW THAT ITS RIGHTFUL LORD HAS RETURNED.

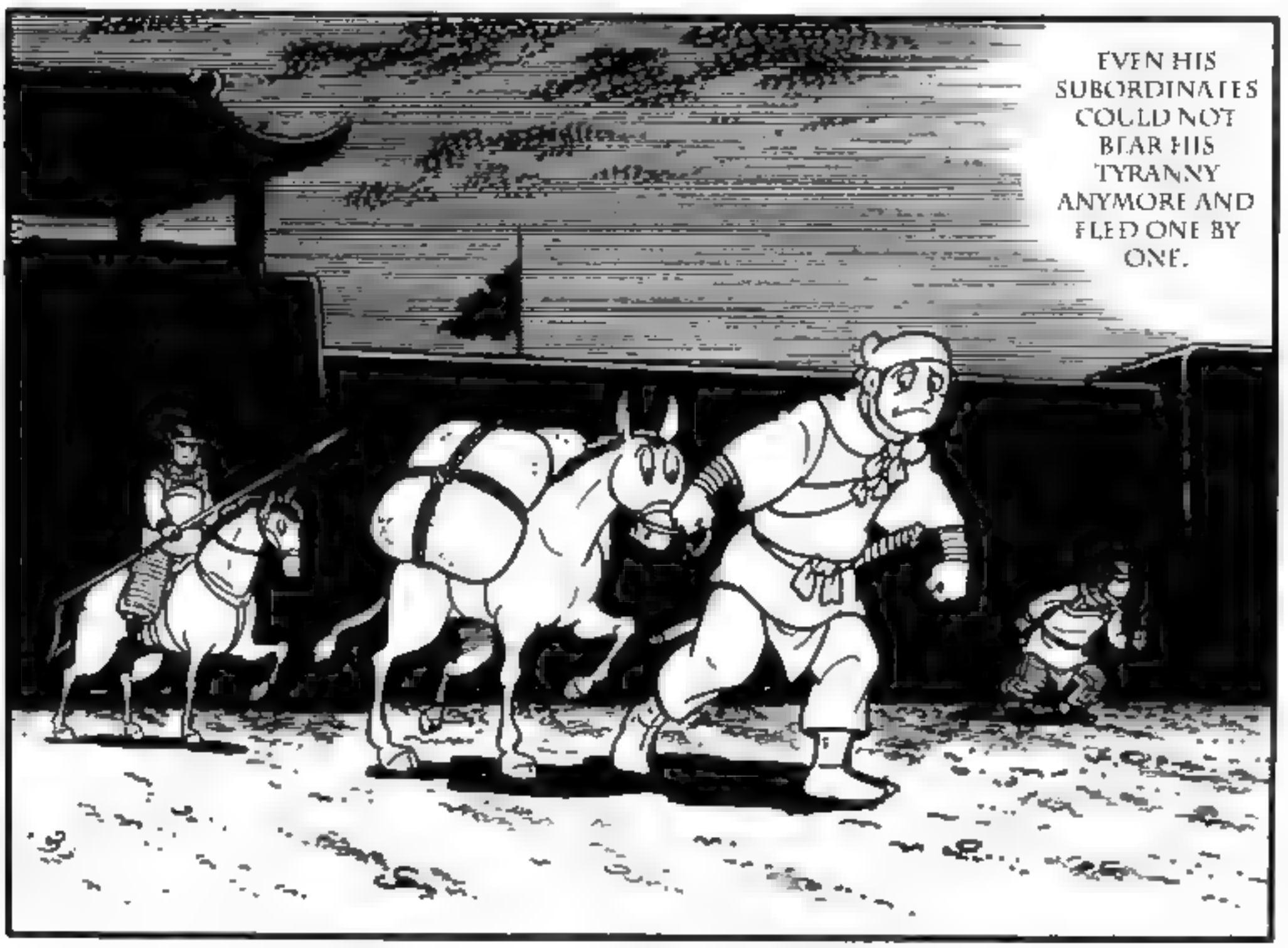
LET US REST EASY AND ENJOY THE FOOD AND WINE TONIGHT.
AND I FINALLY FEEL LIKE I'M AT HOME AS WELL!
BUT STARTING TOMOR-ROW, WE MUST FIND OUT WHAT YUAN SHU IS CURRENTLY DOING AND BEGIN PLANNING OUR ATTACK.


LET US NOW TAKE A MOMENT TO TALK ABOUT YUAN SHU IN HUAINAN


AFTER NAM ING HIMSELF EMP- EROR,

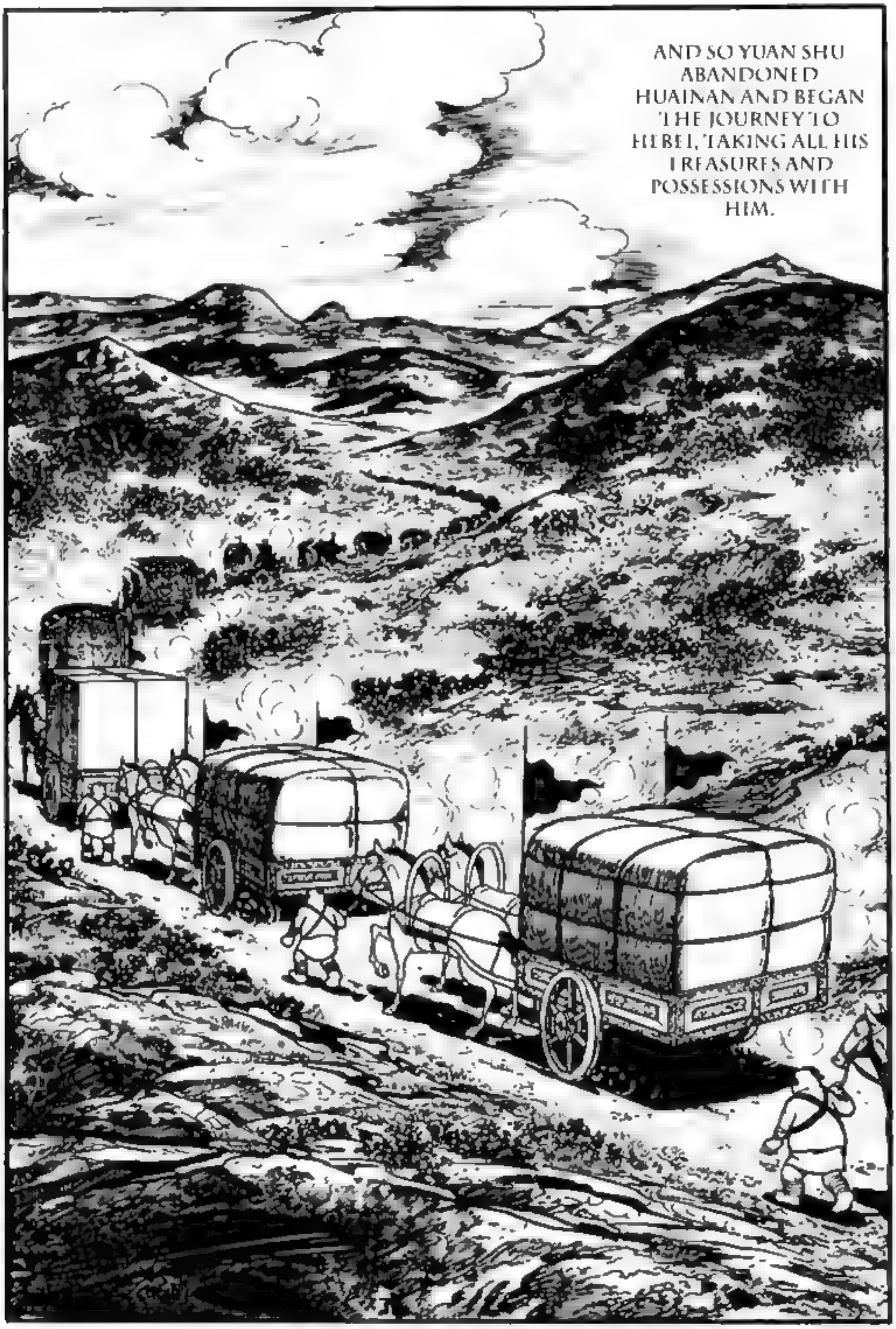

HE SPENT AN ENOR MOUS AMOUNT OF MONEY TO CON- STRUCT A NEW PALACE AND OTHER HOUSES BEFITTING HIS NEW STATUS AS EMPEROR
TO DO SO, HE SHARPLY RAISED TAXES AND EXECUTED ANY WHO DARED TO REBEL.

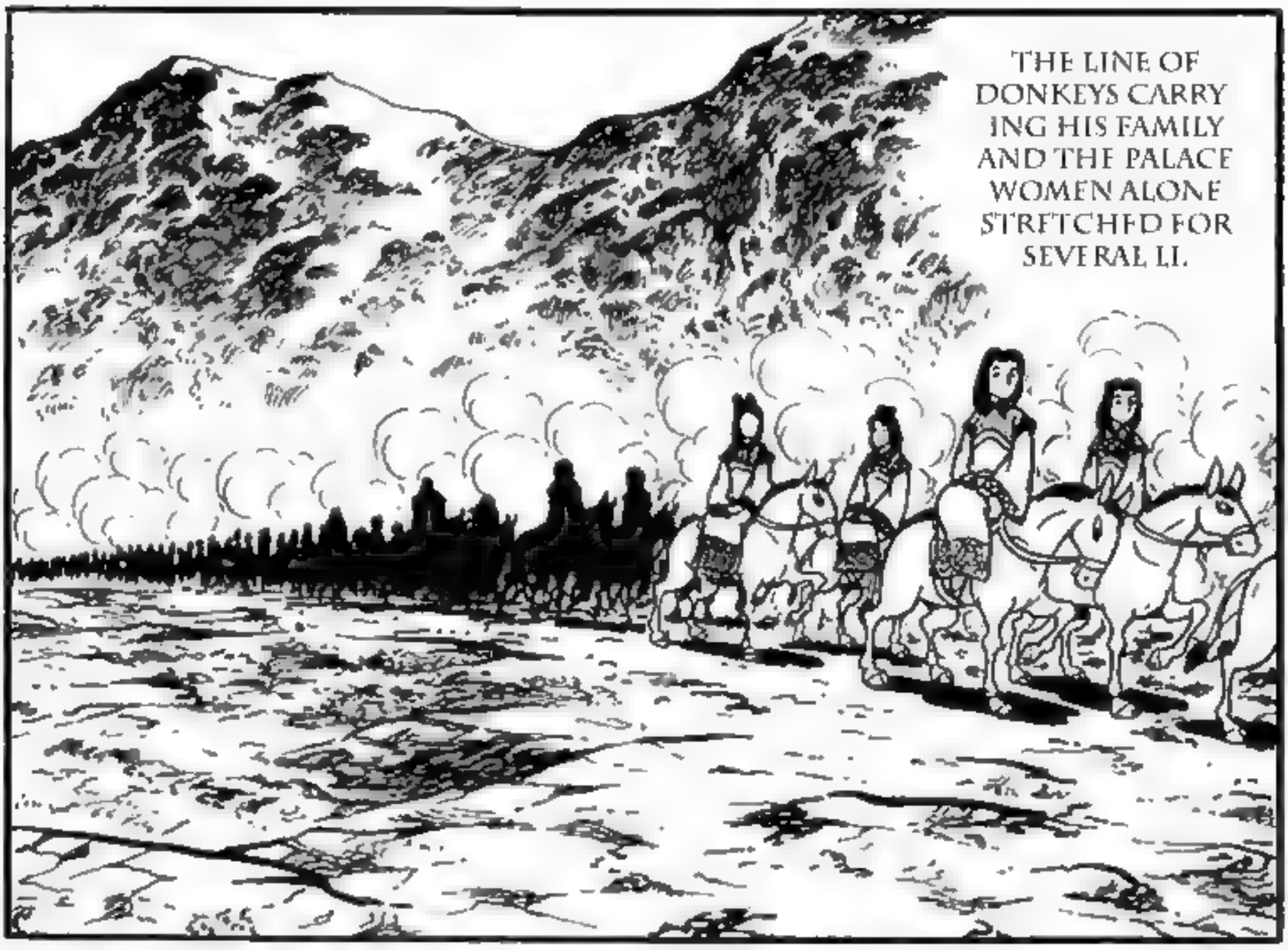

BEING NOT EVEN LEFT WITH A SINGLE GRAIN OF RICE, THE PEOPLE HAD ONLY THE STRENGTH TO MUTTER CURSES AGAINST YUAN SHU AS THEY STARVED TO DEATH

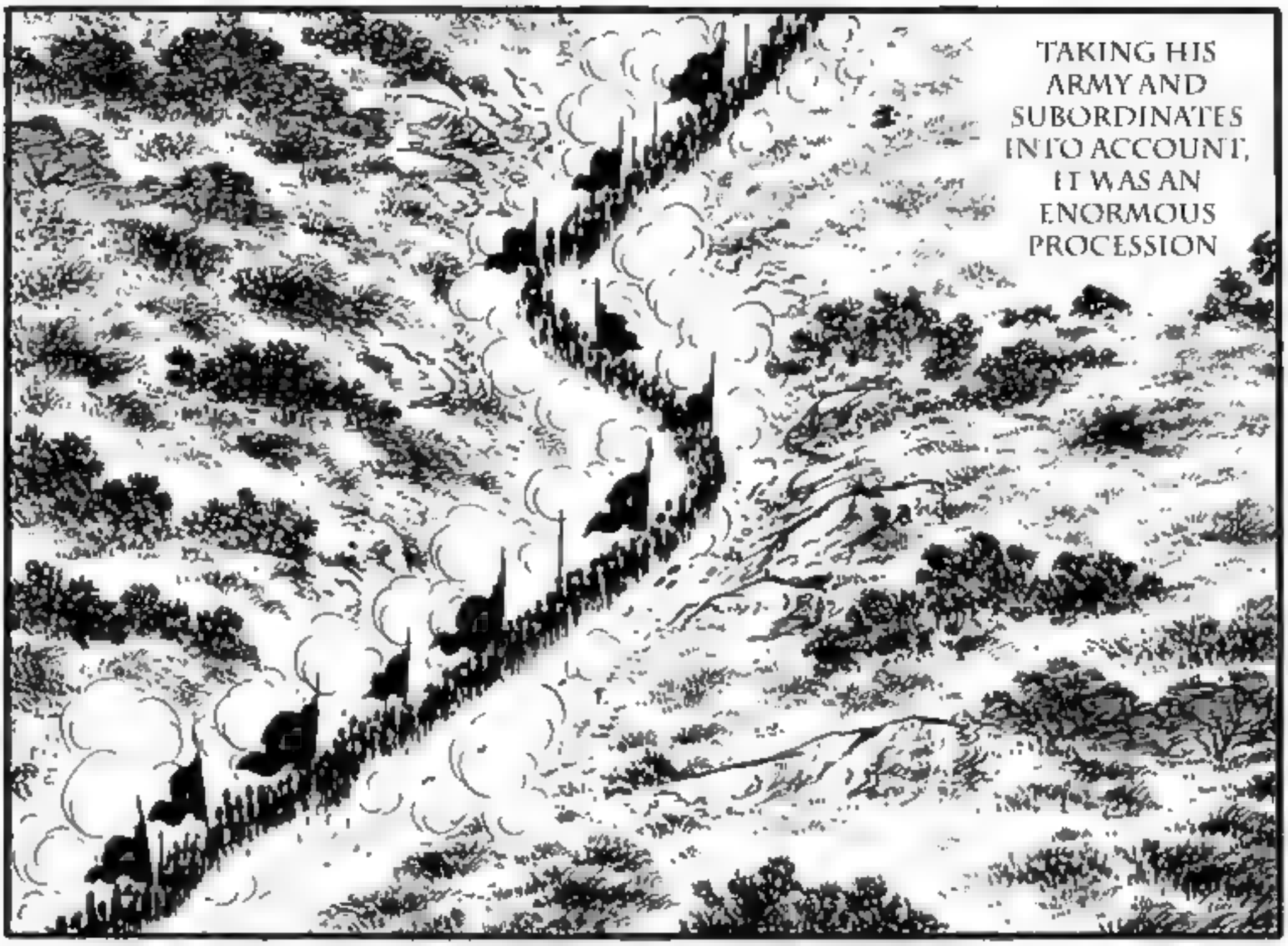

EVEN HIS SUBORDINATES COULD NOT BEAR HIS TYRANNY ANYMORE AND FLED ONE BY ONE.

AT LAST, EVEN YUAN SHU REALIZED HE COULD NOT CARRY ON WITH HIS CURRENT SITUATION. HE THUS ASKED HIS BROTHER TO HELP HIM OUT, IN RETURN FOR THE IMPERIAL SEAL AND THE ABDICATION OF HIS THRONE

BEING MORE CONFIDENT THAN EVER AFTER HIS RECENT VICTORY OVER GONGSUN ZAN, YUAN SHAO AGREED TO TAKE HIS BROTHER IN. HOWEVER, IT WAS ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT YUAN SHU WOULD LEAVE EVERYTHING UP TO HIM ONCE HE CAME TO HEBEI.


AND SO YUAN SHU ABANDONED HUAINAN AND BEGAN THE JOURNEY TO HEBEI, TAKING ALL HIS TREASURES AND POSSESSIONS WITH HIM.


THE LINE OF DONKEYS CARRY ING HIS FAMILY AND THE PALACE WOMEN ALONE STRETCHED FOR SEVERAL LI.


TAKING HIS ARMY AND SUBORDINATES INTO ACCOUNT, IT WAS AN ENORMOUS PROCESSION

WORD OF YUAN SHU'S MOVE SOON REACHED LIU BEI'S EARS

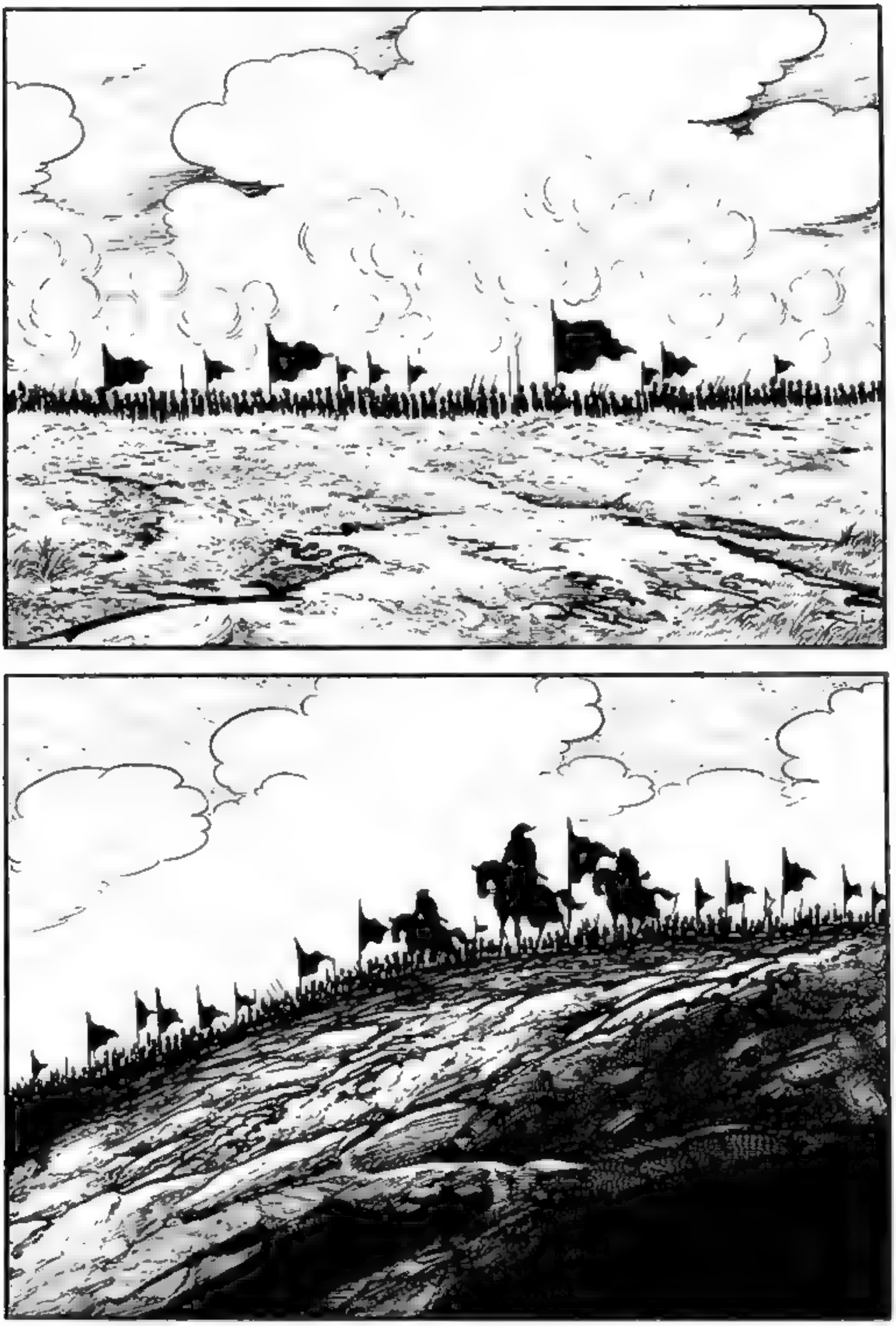
YES, MY LORD. IT IS AN ENORMOUS PROCESSION, FOR HE IS TAKING ALL HIS BELONGINGS WITH HIM.

WHAT!? YUAN SHU HAS STARTED HEADING FOR HEBEI!?

MOBILIZE THE ARMY AT ONCE!

GOOD, NOW'S THE CHANCE TO FINALLY ELIMINATE THAT FAKE EMPEROR YUAN SHU!

50,000 SOLDIERS WERE IMMEDIATELY LED OUT OF XUZHOU BY LIU BEI



HMM, THAT IS AN ENORMOUS PROCESSION JUST AS THE SCOUT REPORTED. I WONDER HOW MANY LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE DID HE RUIN TO AMASS SUCH A FORTUNE?

THAT IS YUAN SHU UP AHEAD.

ALRIGHT, LET US CHARGE IN AT ONCE!

WHAT!?

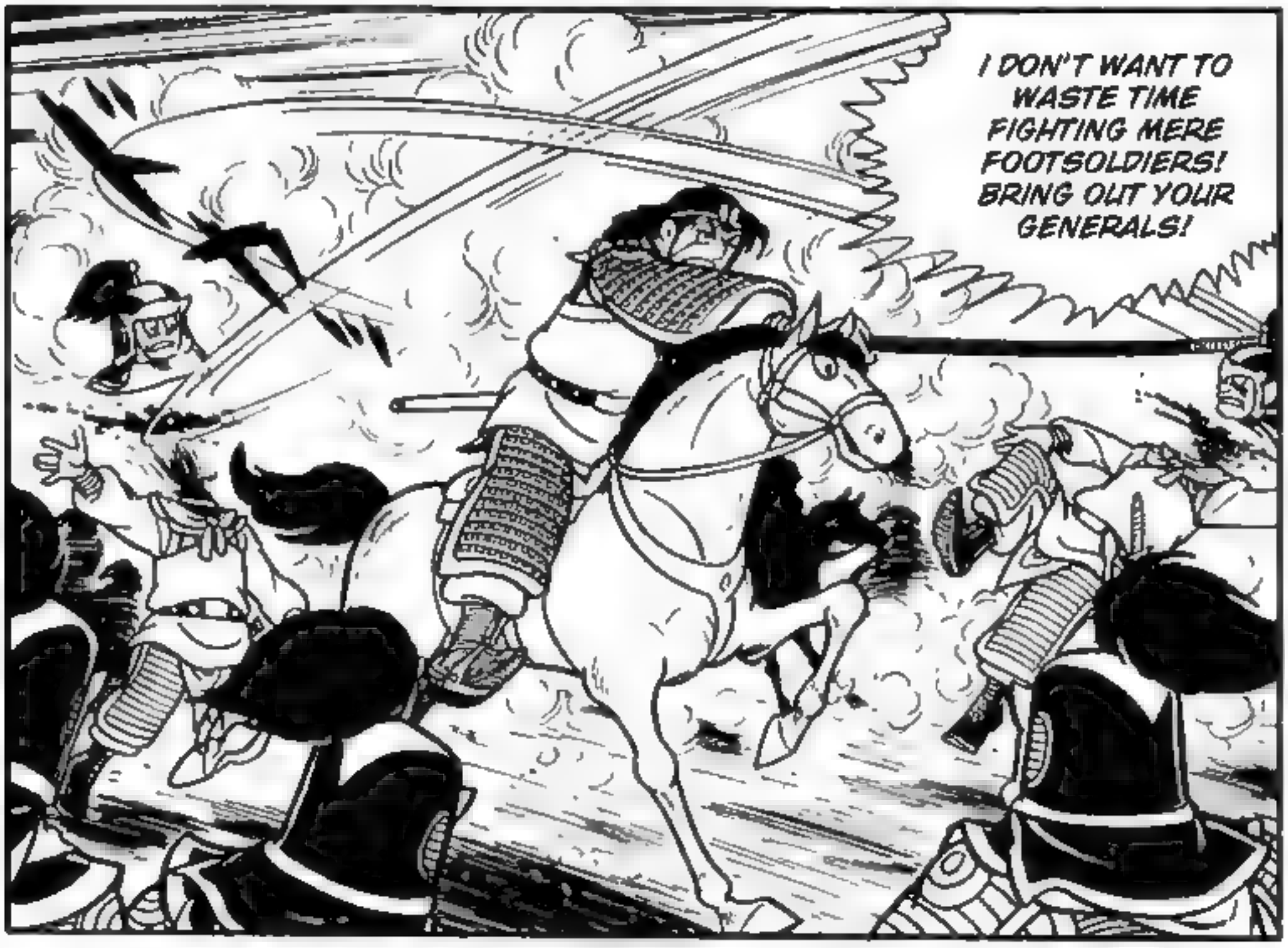
GENERAL JI LING, ENEMY FORCES HAVE APPEARED TO THE FRONT!

THEY'RE CARRYING THE FLAGS OF LIU BEI, GENERAL!

WHOSE FORCES ARE THEY?

PREPARE TO ENGAGE IN BATTLE!

ALRIGHT, I WANT ALL SMALL FRIES TO CLEAR THE WAY!

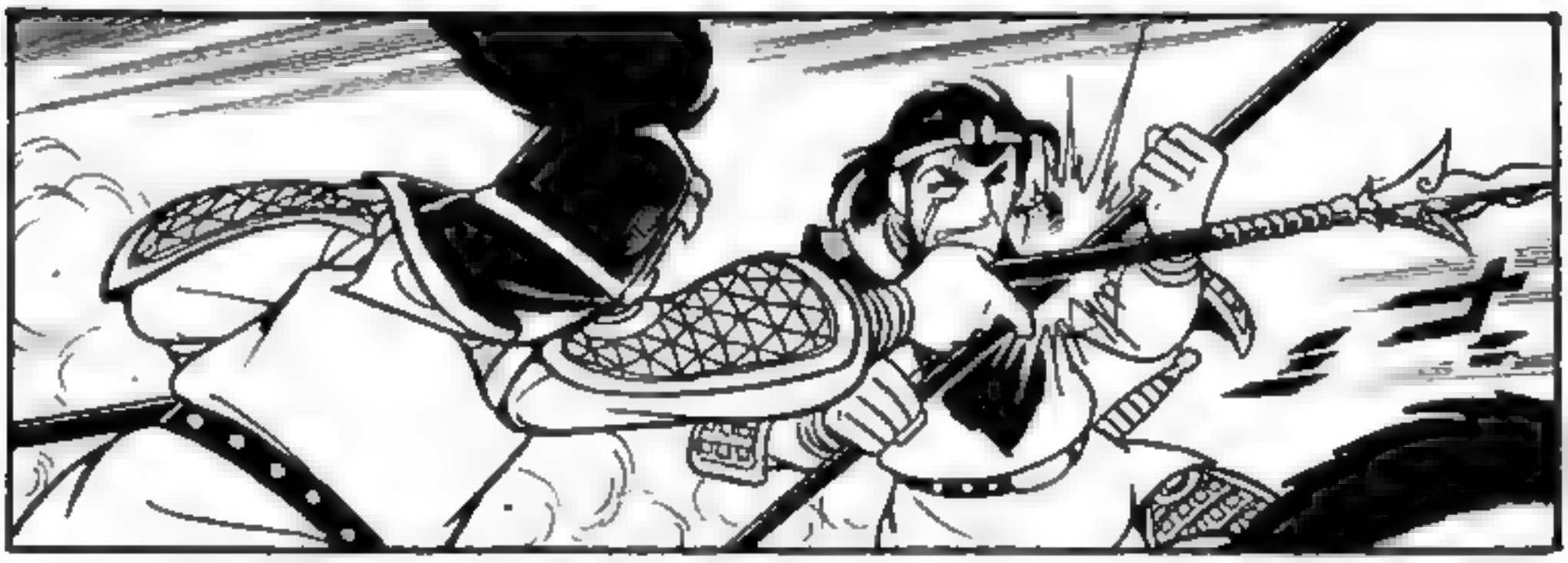

I DON'T WANT TO WASTE TIME FIGHTING MERE FOOTSOLDIERS! BRING OUT YOUR GENERALS!

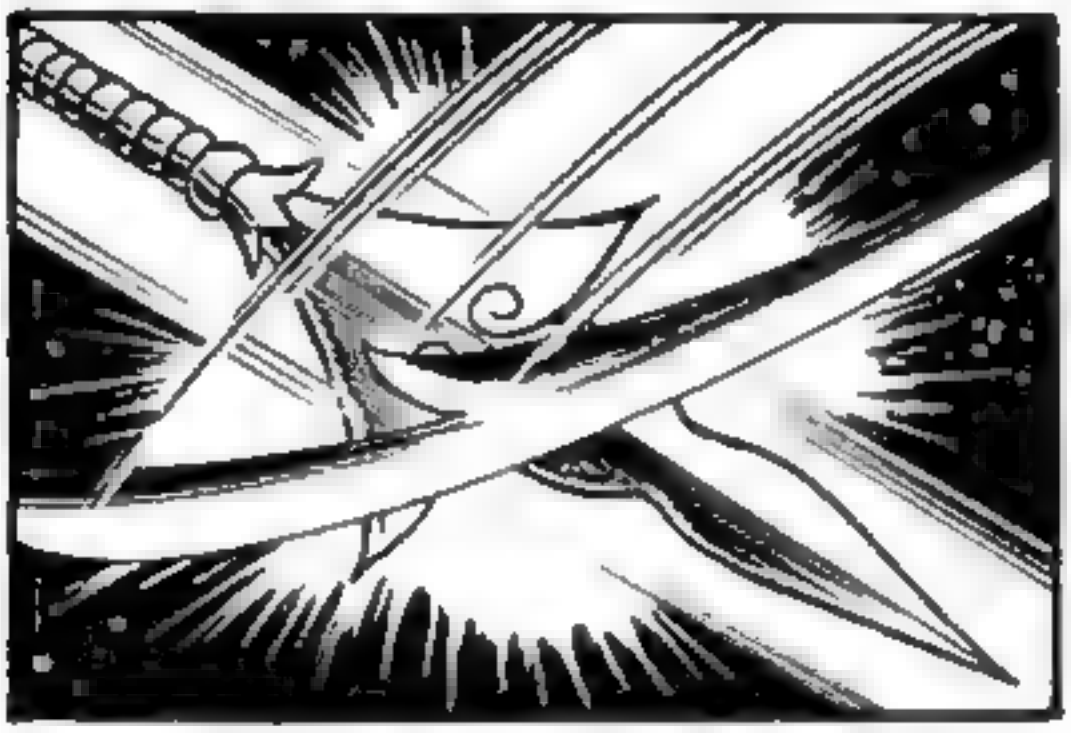
WAIT RIGHT THERE, ZHANG FEI! I SHALL BE YOUR MATCH!

WELL, IF IT ISN'T GENERAL JI LING. LONG TIME NO SEE.

MY FEELINGS EXACTLY.

I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS ABOUT TAKING YOUR HEAD.





WITH SKILLS LIKE THOSE, I COULD TAKE ON TEN OF YOU AT ONCE!

GENERAL!

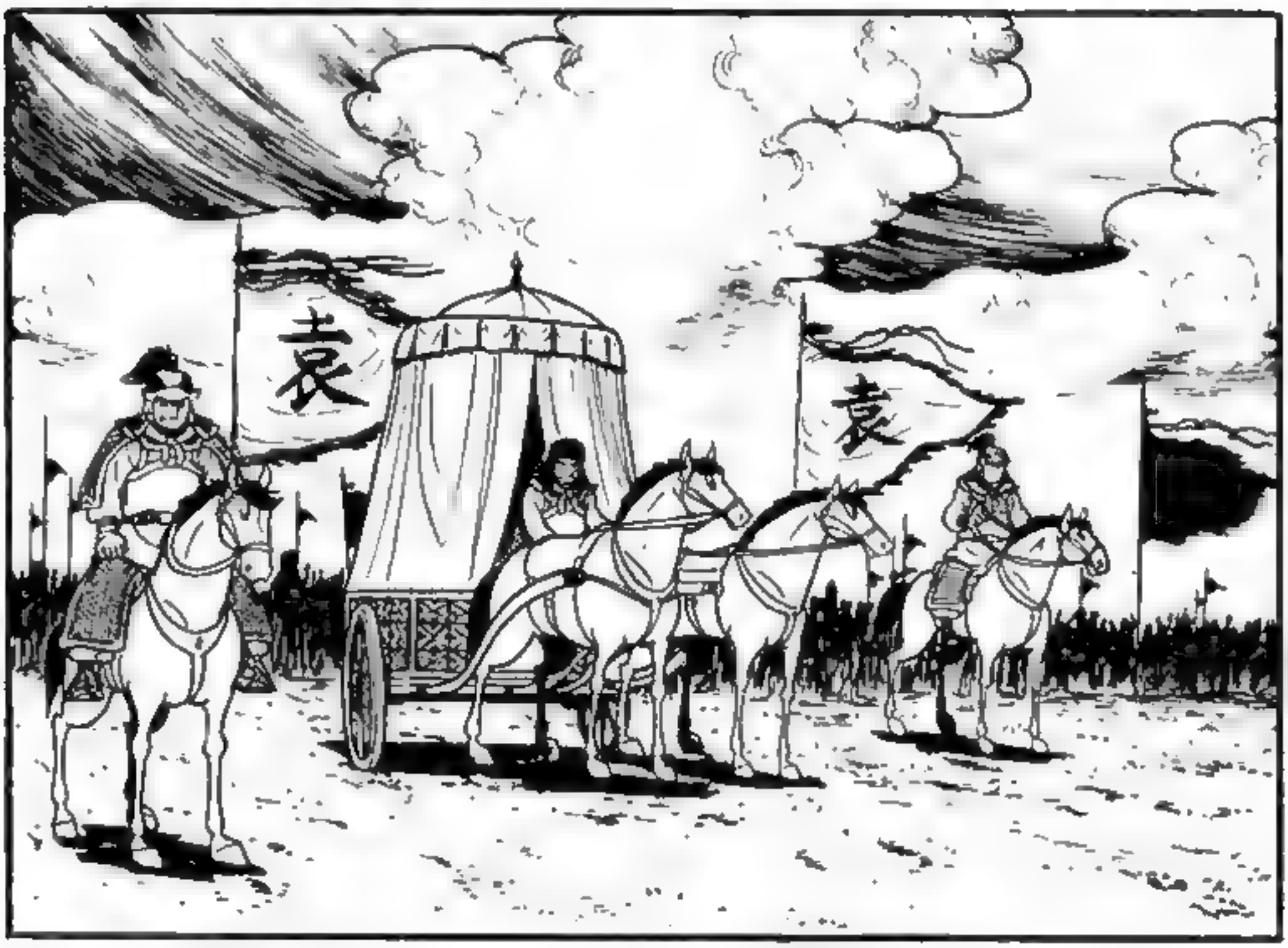
AGHH!

WHO WANTS TO FOLLOW AFTER JI LING'S FOOTSTEPS?

AHHH!

DON'T KEEP ME WAITING NOW!

AGHHHHHH!!!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袁

I'M AFRAID NOT, YOUR HIGHNESS. LIU BEI'S ARMY IS MUCH LARGER THAN WE HAD ANTICIPATED.

HAVE YOU STILL NOT CLEARED THE ENEMY OUT IN FRONT!?

ガッ ガッ ガッ

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS.

PATHETIC! CALL UP THE SOLDIERS FROM OUR REAR TO HELP WITH THE BATTLE!

WHAT'S THAT!?

AHH!

GIVE ME MY SPEAR!

W-WHAT!? THE ENEMIES ARE ALREADY UP HERE!?

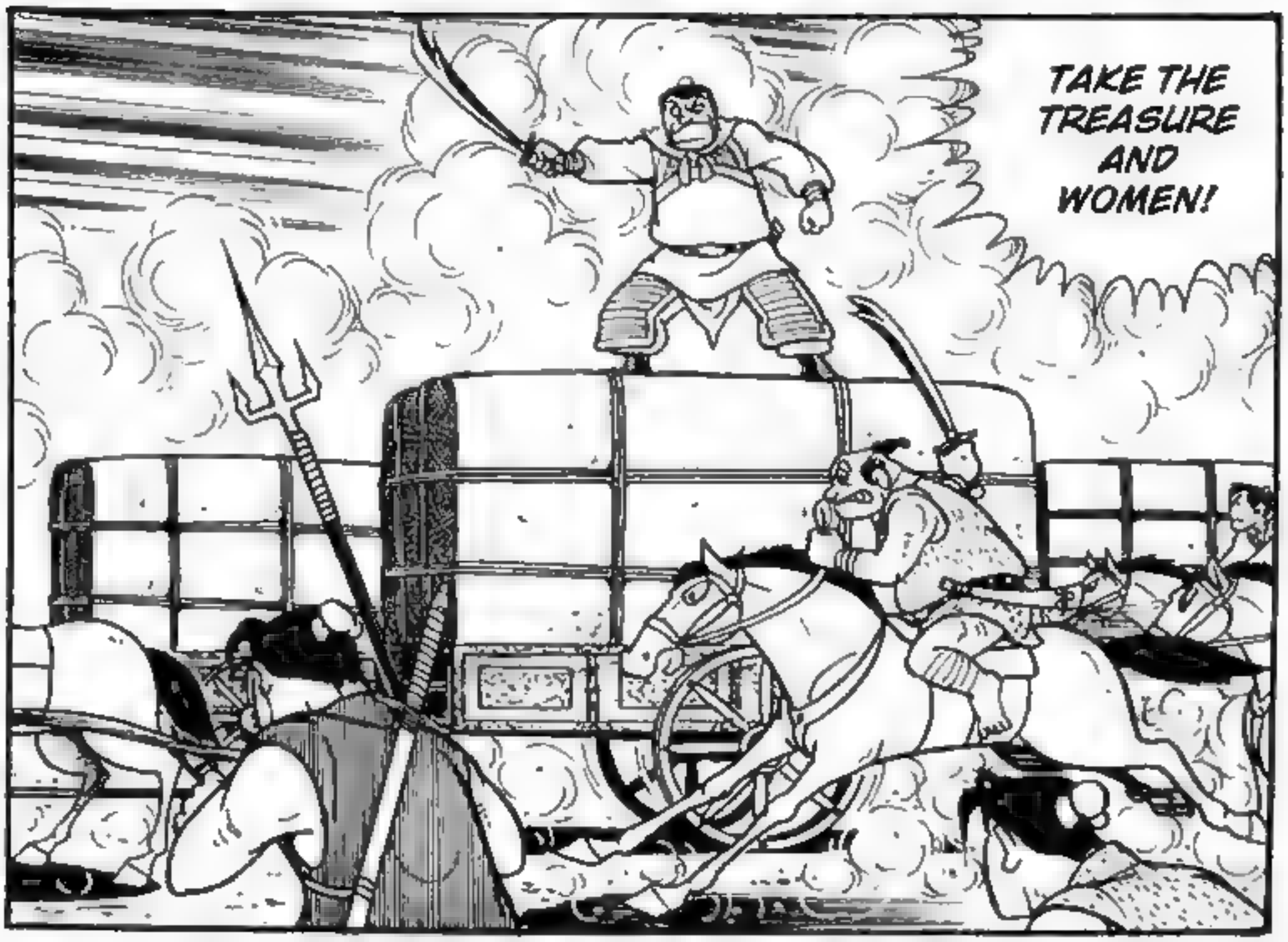
KYAAA!

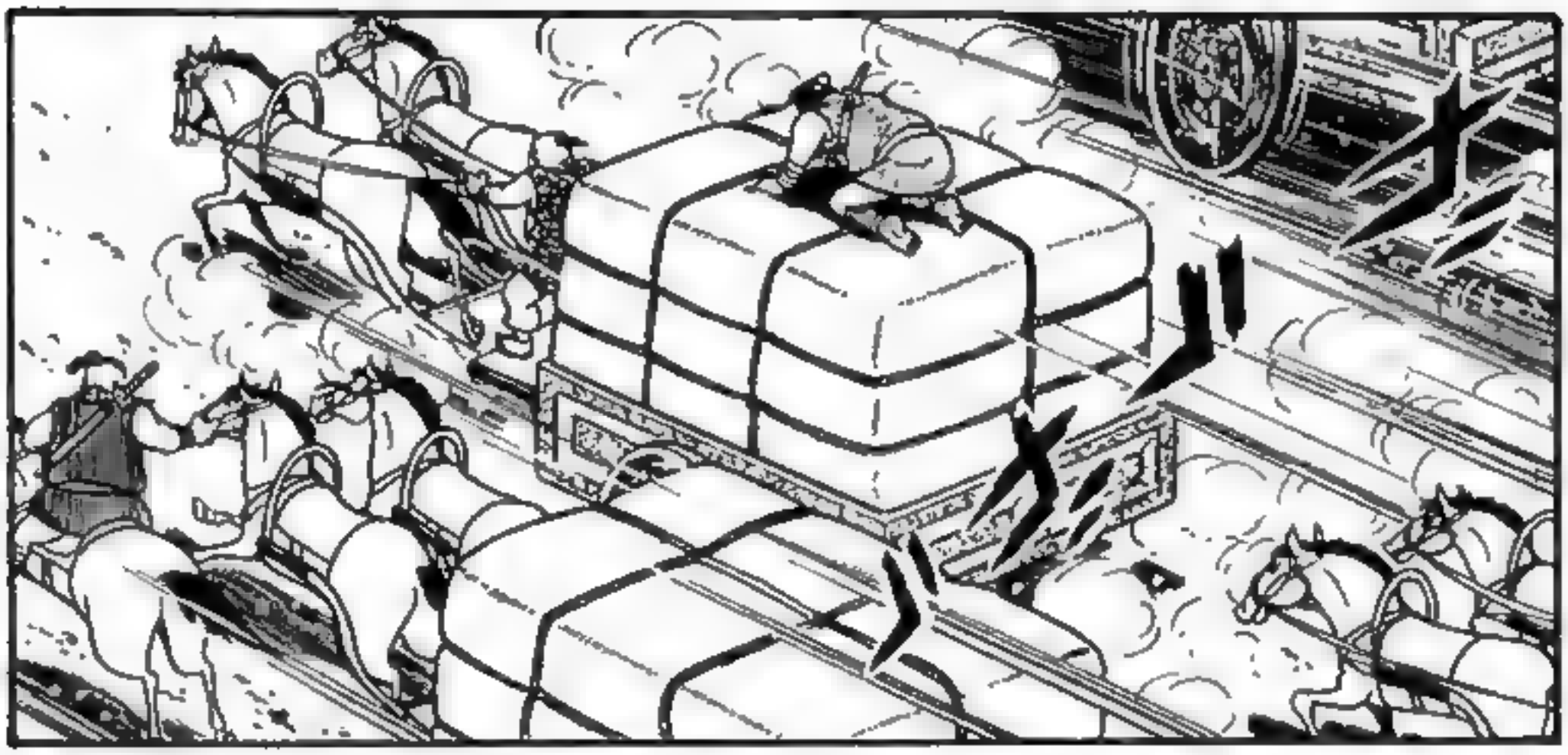
KYAA!

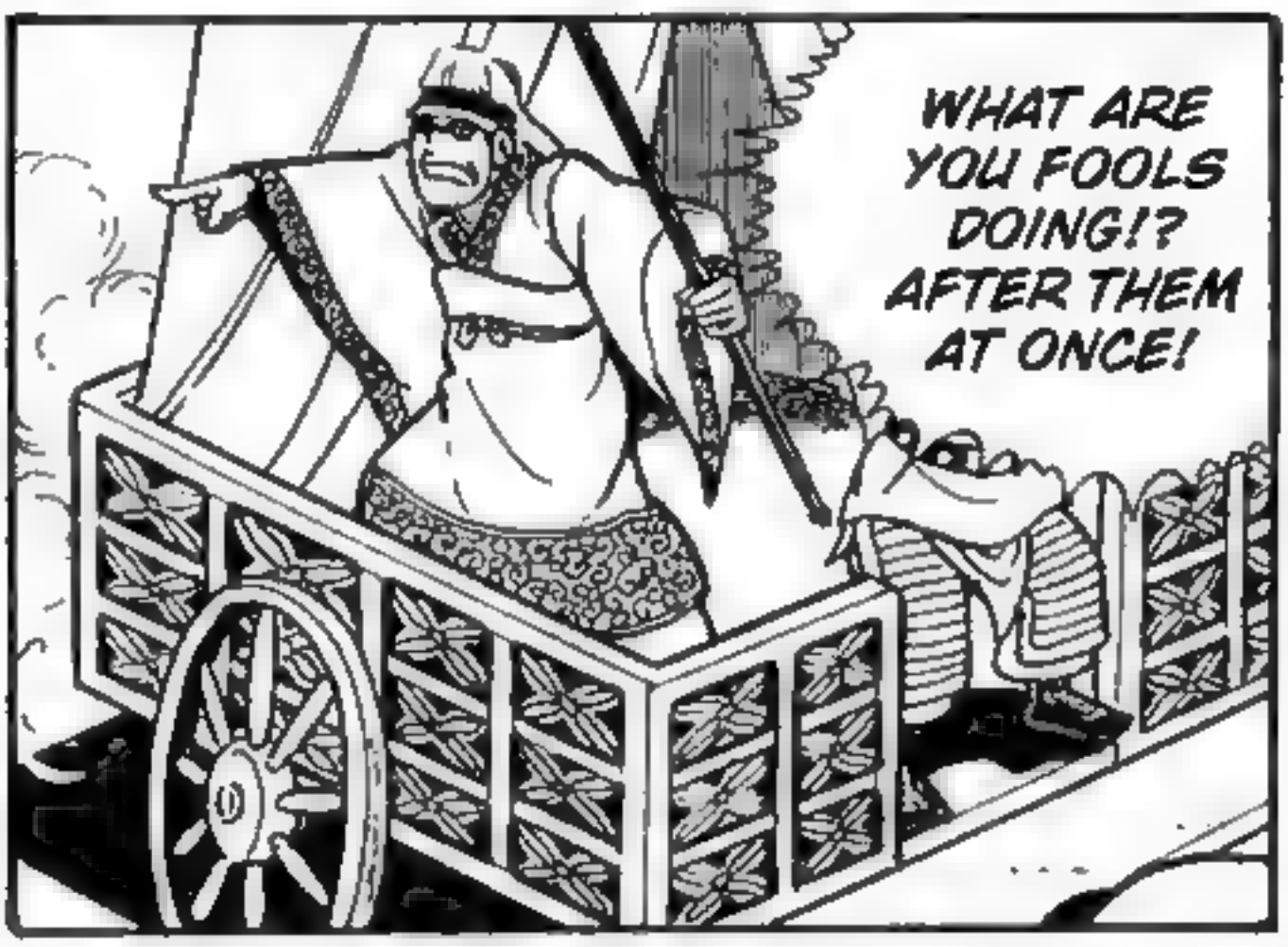
W-WHAT!?

YOUR HIGH-NESS, THOSE AREN'T LIU BEI'S TROOPS. THEY ARE BANDITS.

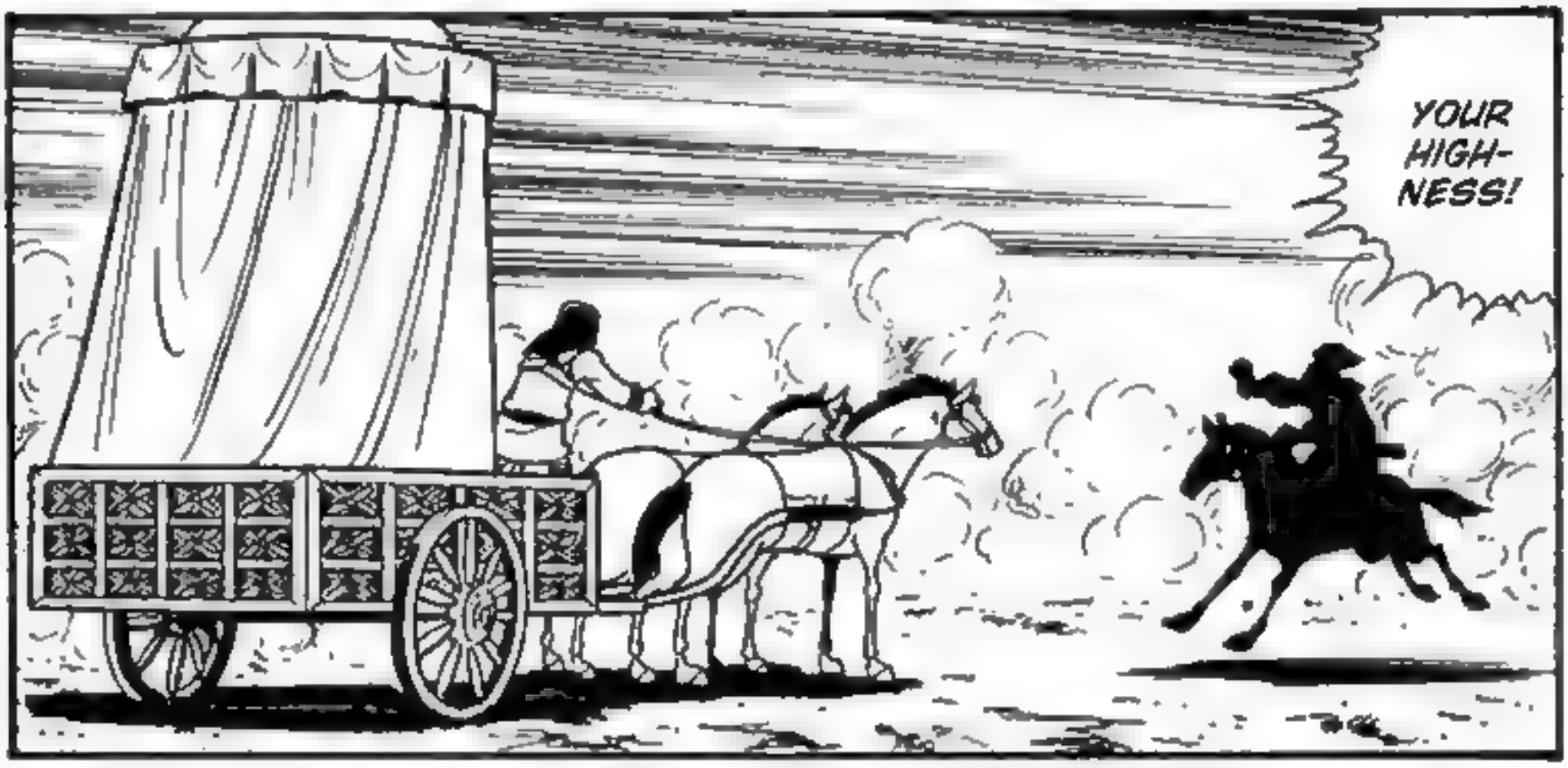
HAHAHA, LOOK AT ALL THIS TREASURE!


TAKE THE TREASURE AND WOMEN!




WHAT ARE YOU FOOLS DOING!? AFTER THEM AT ONCE!

AHH!


YOUR HIGH-NESS!

WHAT!?

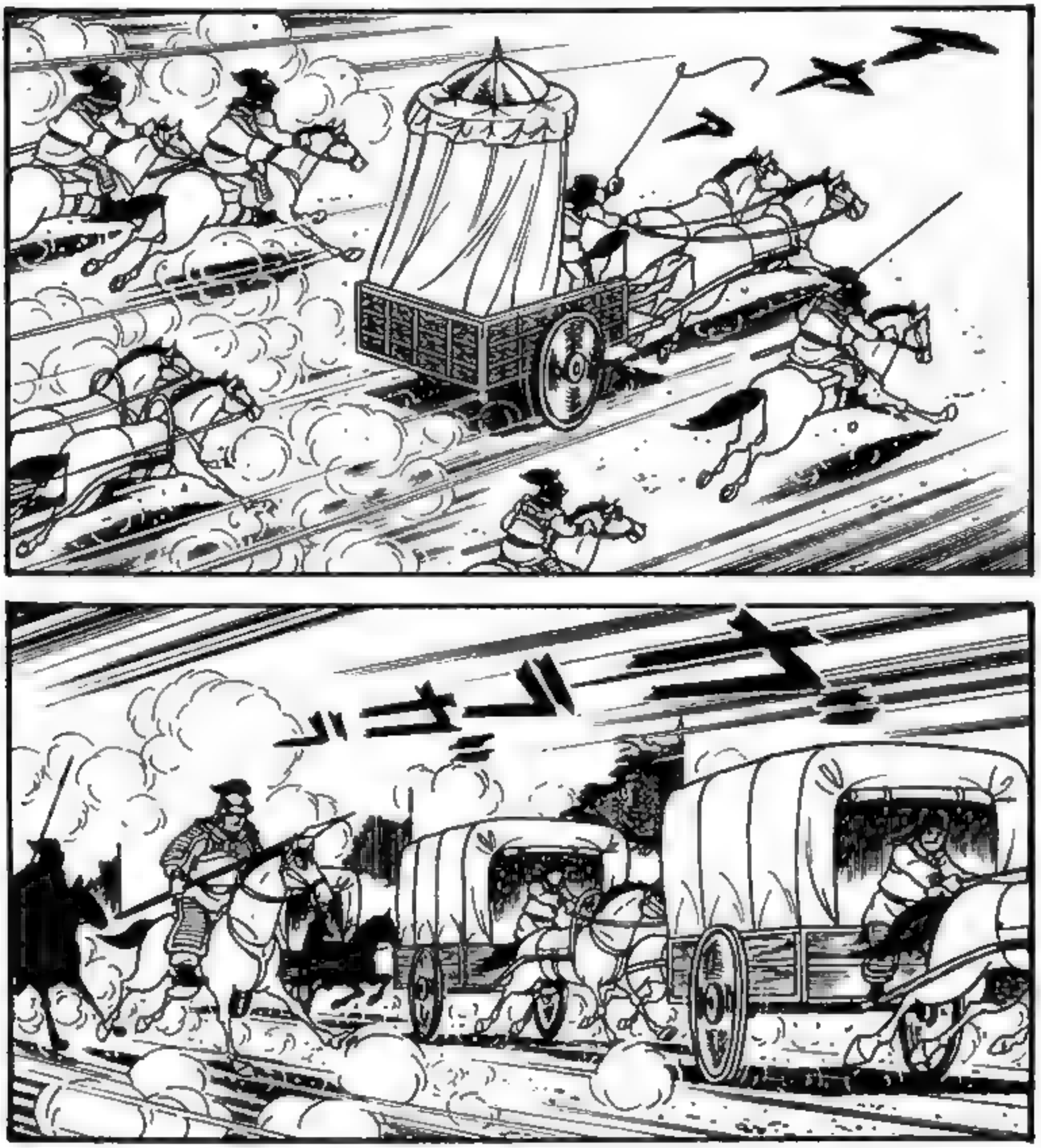
THE 1ST AND 2ND DIVISIONS HAVE BEEN ANNHI-LATED BY LIU BEI'S FORCES!

JUST TAKE A LOOK AT THE DUST KICKED UP BY THEIR HORSES ALREADY BACK THERE, YOUR HIGHNESS!

WE MUST FLEE AT ONCE. THE ENEMIES WILL REACH HERE IN A SHORT MATTER OF TIME, YOUR HIGHNESS.

FINE, LET US FLEE AT ONCE!

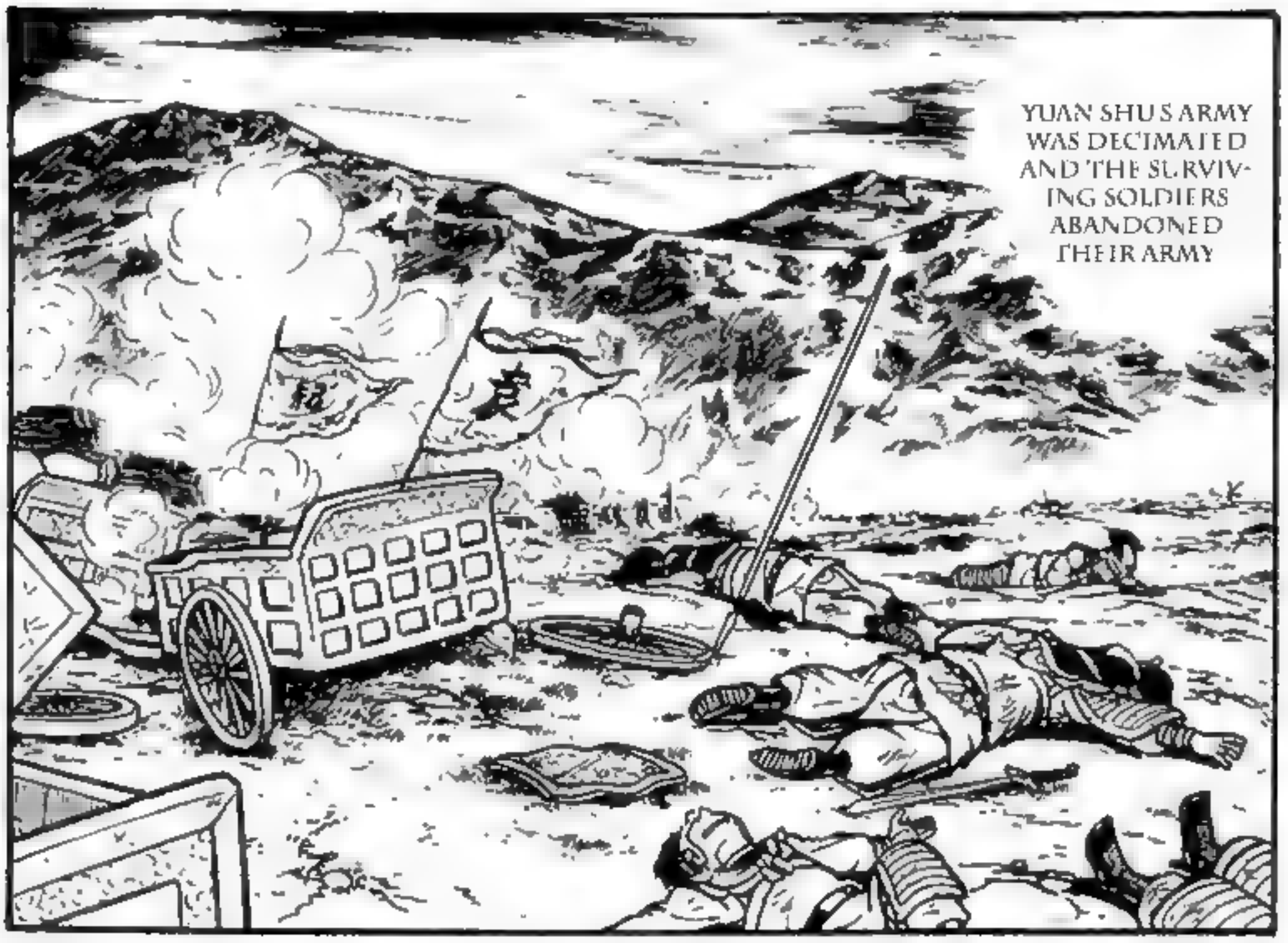
AHH!

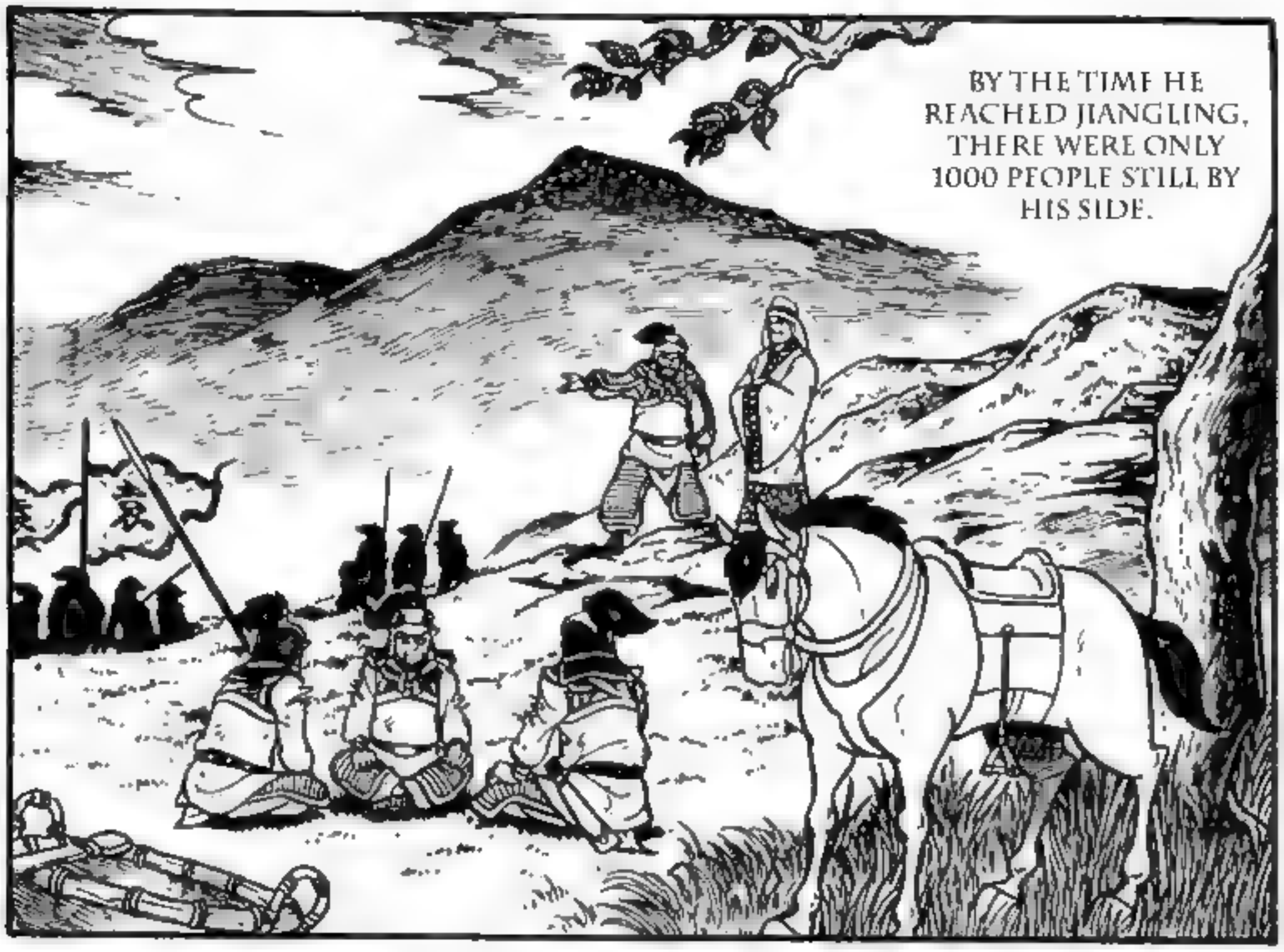


THERE WAS NO WAY THE BANDITS WOULD TURN A BLIND EYE TO ALL HIS TREASURES
BY NIGHT,
THEY WERE ATTACKED BY BANDITS

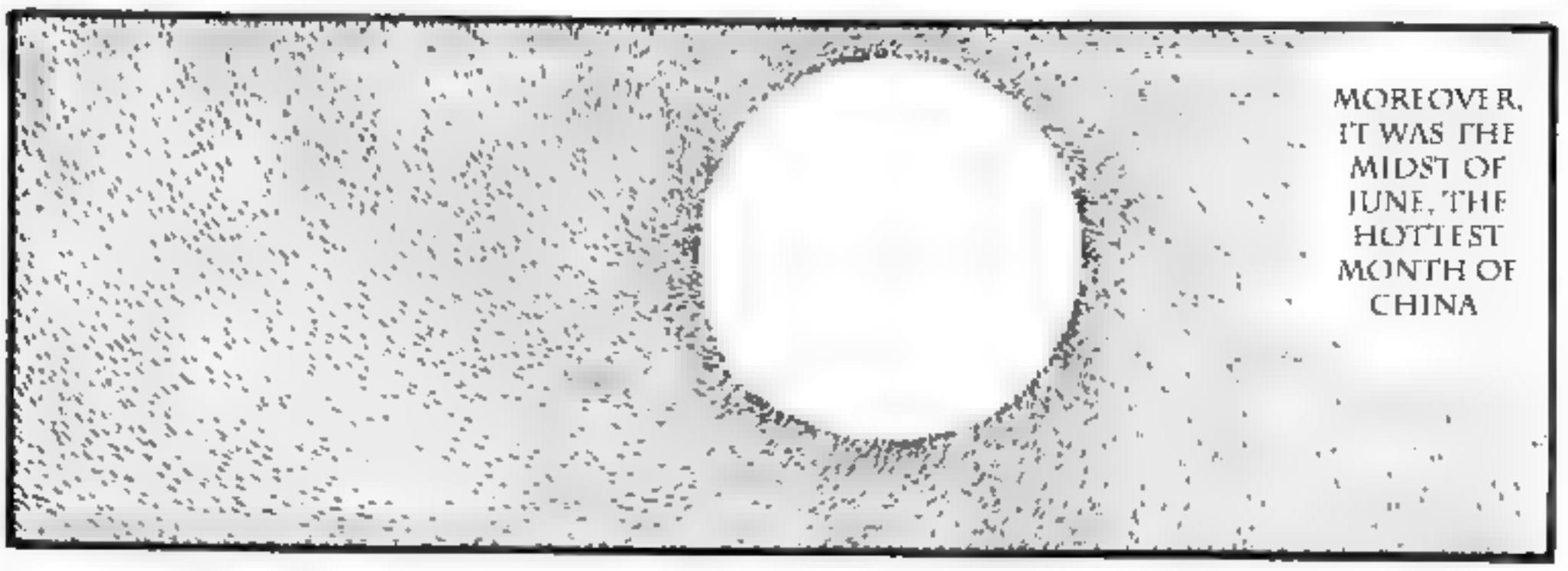
BUT THINGS ONLY GREW WORSE FOR YUAN SHU

AND BY DAY, THEY WERE ATTACKED BY LIU BEI'S FORCES


YUAN SHU'S ARMY WAS DECIMATED AND THE SURVIVING SOLDIERS ABANDONED THEIR ARMY

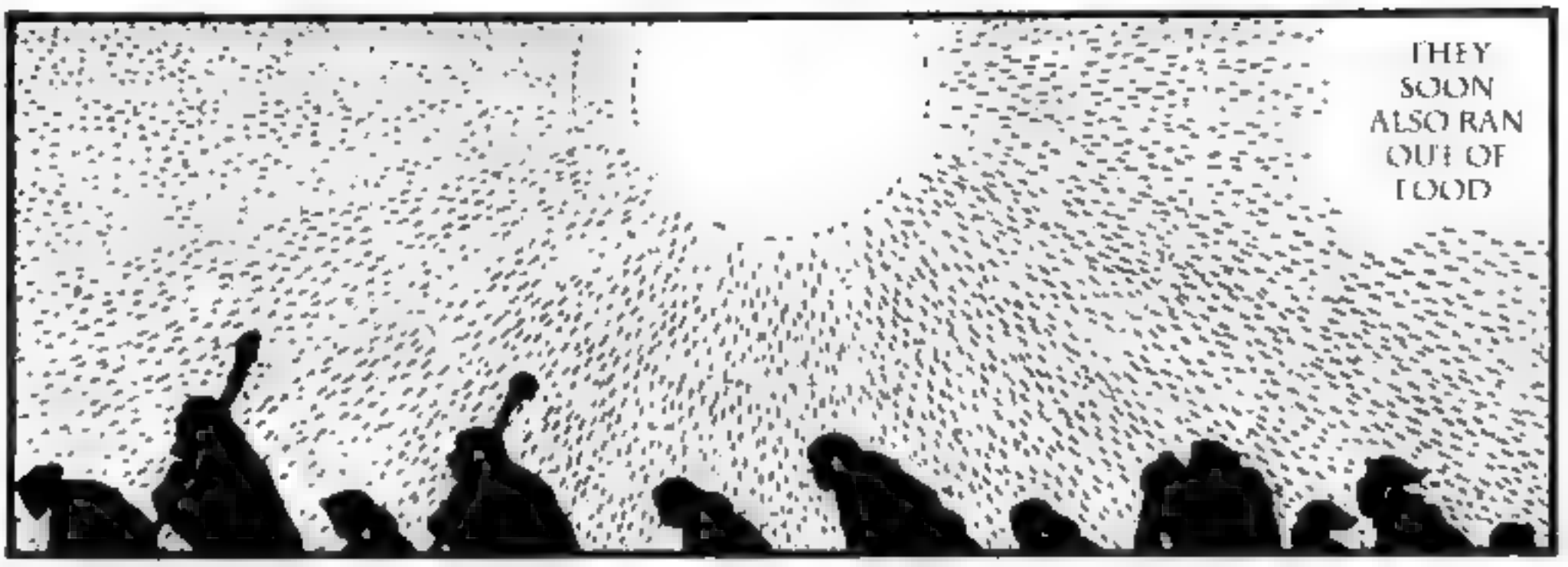

BY THE TIME HE REACHED JIANGLING, THERE WERE ONLY 1000 PEOPLE STILL BY HIS SIDE.

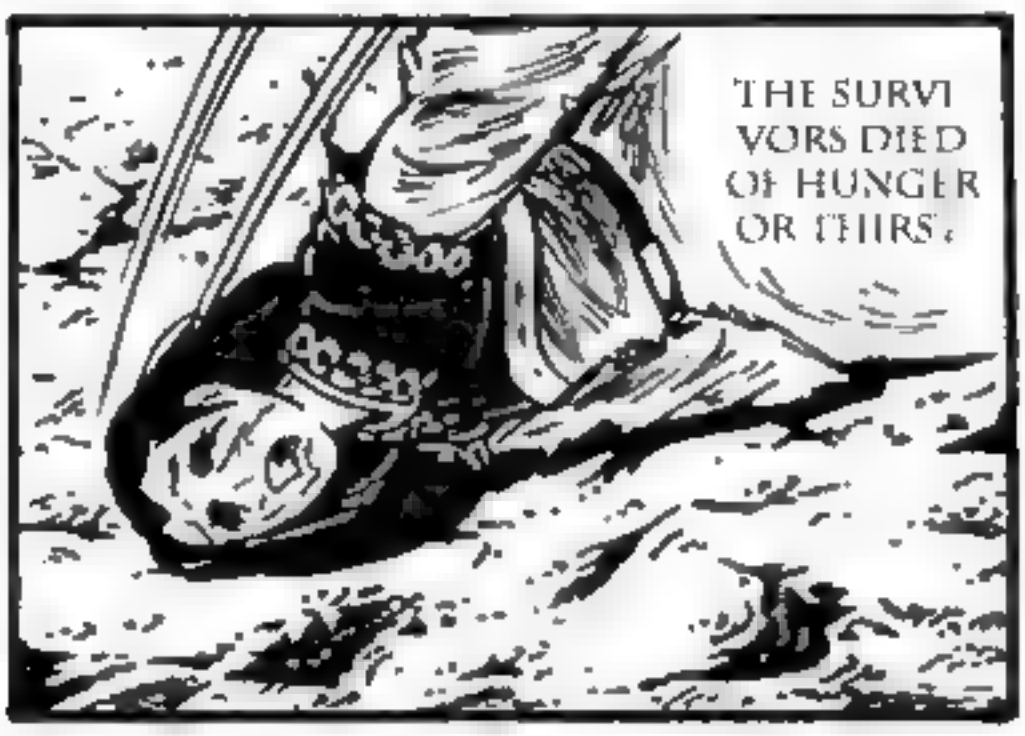
AND MOST OF THEM WERE WOMEN OR THE OLD

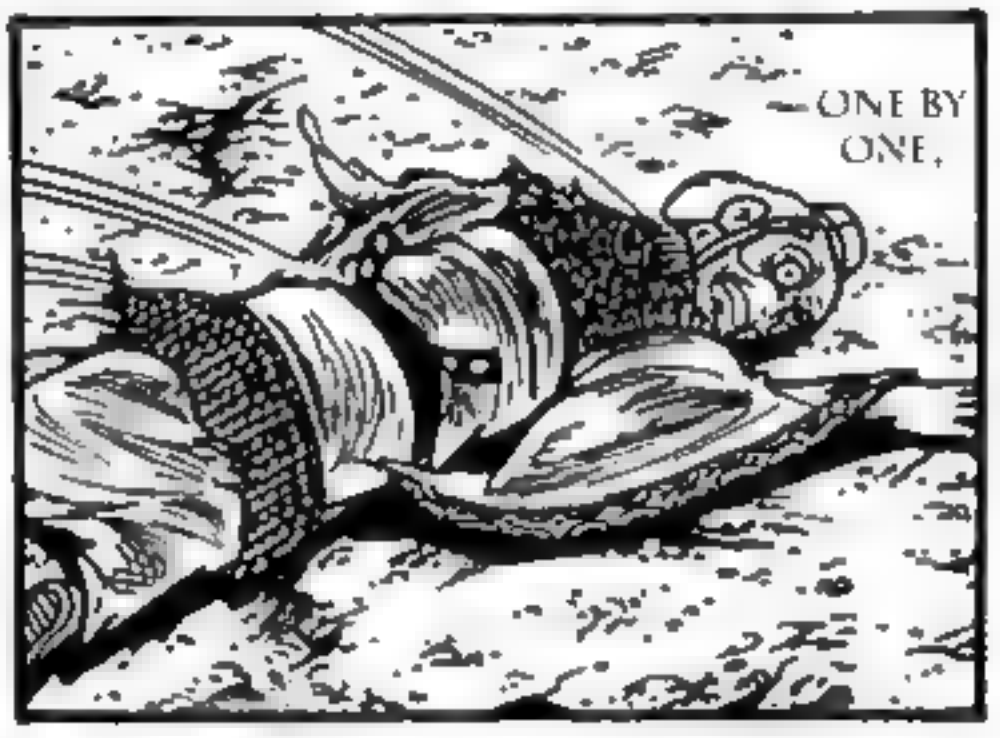

MOREOVER, IT WAS THE MIDST OF JUNE, THE HOTTEST MONTH OF CHINA

MANY OF THE SURVI-
VORS COLLAPSED DUE
TO DEHYDRATION.

CALLING
OUT FOR
WATER.


THEY
SOON
ALSO RAN
OUT OF
FOOD


THE SURVI
VORS DIED
OF HUNGER
OR THIRST.


—ONE BY
ONE.

YES, YOUR HIGH-NESS.

MY NEWPHEW YUAN YIN, ARE YOU THE ONLY ONE STILL LEFT...?

HAH... HAH...

YES, I KNOW...

BUT YOUR HIGHNESS, WITH NO FOOD NOR WATER, WE'LL...

AHH!

L-LOOK! IT'S A HOUSE!

W-WE'RE SAVED!

IT IS YOUR EMPEROR, YUAN SHU. BRING ME SOME WATER AT ONCE.

WHO IS IT?

ナヤア

WHAT...!?

THE VILLAGERS AND I'VE BEEN ROBBED OF EVERYTHING ELSE BY YOU.

THE ONLY THING I HAVE LEFT IS MY OWN BLOOD.

SORRY, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL OUT OF WATER.

AHH!

WOULD YOUR HIGHNESS LIKE TO SUCK MY BLOOD DRY LIKE THE PARASITE YOU ARE!?

WAS I REALLY AN EMPEROR WHO COULDN'T EVEN GET A SINGLE DRINK FROM HIS OWN PEOPLE!? TO THINK THAT I WAS LOATHED THIS MUCH!!!

I AM AN EMPEROR ABANDONED BY HIS PEOPLE...

TRANSLATED BY HOX

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横山 光輝

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